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ADVERTISING
BUSINESS

ROY S. DURSTINE

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BY
Roy S. Durstine

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This
ADVERTISING
Business

This Advertising Business

I

FOR a number of years this country has cocked a querulous eye at advertising. People have wondered about it, rebelled at it, marvelled at it, derided it, analyzed it, debated and conferred about it—and read it.

Advertising has argued with them in their magazines and their newspapers, shouted at them from posters, twinkled at them from electric lights, stared at them from car-cards, beckoned to them from shop-windows. Even the air has proved to be a very practical vehicle for this amazing element in our national life. Advertising talks to us and sings for us and plays for us, gliding into our homes on

radio waves at the rate of 186,000 miles a second. It sends aviators into the blue to draw letters a mile high. It even talks to us from the clouds.

Advertising has been called a phenomenon, a profession, a business, an art, a selling force. It has been described as written salesmanship, as a science, as a cultural influence and as bunk.

Since it is here, and since it seems to be helping in some way to build most of the substantial American enterprises, and since it has developed most rapidly here in these United States, there is an evident tendency to cock the eye less querulously and with more interest. This noticeably changed attitude in the past dozen years seems based on the idea that perhaps advertising will seem less odd and baffling if it is a little better understood. More and more people are asking quite honestly:

“What’s it all about, anyway?”

Well, it’s like this:

A radio manufacturer has a laboratory in which he works with his engineers to perfect

a receiving-set. They theorize, they experiment, and finally they produce by hand something which satisfies them.

They know that a great many people would like to have a radio set like that if it could be offered at a reasonable price. But they also know that if each set is made by hand, like the original model, it must cost a great deal of money.

So the manufacturer designs and builds some automatic machinery. One piece of this machinery may cost fifty thousand dollars. He builds several. To house them and the operators to man them, he puts up a factory which spreads over a great many acres.

Now, he can produce these sets rapidly and at a very reasonable price. Homes are waiting for them in Florida and Oregon, in California and Maine.

What makes him think that he can move these sets from his machines into those homes? What gave him the confidence to invest in that laboratory, in automatic machinery, in that

factory space? What induces him to invest in salesmen to tell the retail merchants everywhere that a radio set with his name on it will soon be ready?

He knows that if his set is properly made and sensibly priced, plenty of people will buy it *if he tells them about it*.

So he tells them—and that's advertising.

Without it, he could make radio sets—but not so many. Without it, he could sell radio sets—but not so reasonably. Without it, some people could enjoy radio—but not so many.

Advertising is a link in the chain. Its job is to let a lot of people know the news all at once, to quicken the whole proceeding, and make possible the big production that leads to lower cost.

There it is in its essentials. Business executives with as sound knowledge of the fundamentals of advertising as this manufacturer's are using it as simply and directly as he is.

But, unfortunately, the use of advertising is not always so clear; its application is not al-

ways so easy to understand. Even in this case, can the story best be told through newspapers or magazines, through letters or circulars or window-displays, through broadcasting or posters or sky-writing? And how shall the story be told? And who shall tell it? The combinations are infinite. Is it any wonder that even with the fundamentals clearly in mind the application of advertising can become confused as the conditions change?

It is with the hope that some of these difficulties may be clarified, even a little, by suggesting the application of the reader's own common sense, that these random notes have been put down in great disorder.

Four Gentlemen's Comments

II

MARK SULLIVAN, in the second volume of *Our Times*, records the coming of advertising into contemporary history in this fashion:

“About the turn of the century, new mediums [of culture] arose and old ones changed in their relative influence. The stage was always a medium of culture, but in America up to about 1900 had comparatively little contact with the predominantly rural part of the population, or with the considerable body of people who held the stage under a taboo. After 1900 the influence of the stage spread and there was added to it a new and potent source

of manners and points of view, the motion-picture. About 1900, also, part of one of the older sources of culture, reading-matter, in so far as it appeared in newspapers and periodicals, came to be occupied in increasing degree by persons having wares to sell, was devoted mainly to causing people to want more goods, was called advertising, was highly organized, and became extremely potent as an influence on American habits of mind."

Still earlier, in 1874, one Henry Sampson published in London *A History of Advertising from the Earliest Times, illustrated by Anecdotes, curious Specimens, and Biographical Notes*. This volume is authority for the statement that the first daily paper was published in London in the reign of Queen Anne, and remarks, after describing journalistic progress until 1792:

"All this time advertising was a growing art, and advertisements were beginning to make themselves manifest as the main support and chief source of profit of newspapers, as well

as the most natural channel of communication between the buyers and sellers, the needing and supplying members of a vast community."

Even before that, if we are to believe a noted writer of an earlier day, advertising had established itself in England:

"The trade of advertising is now so near to perfection that it is not easy to propose any improvement."

The gentleman who expressed that opinion was Samuel Johnson, and he expressed it in 1759. It has been around for quite a while.

But it remained for Roger W. Babson in this year of 1928, in *Collier's* weekly, to make the most tangible comment on the place of advertising in American business. In his article called "Worth Your Money" occur these paragraphs:

"Regarding individual men, it has been said that some are born great and others achieve greatness. Not so with a business. A Permanently Successful Business Is Never Born Great, But Must ACHIEVE GREATNESS

with NATIONAL ADVERTISING Playing
An Almost Indispensable Rôle.

“The Bankers of the coming generation will hesitate to lend money to a business man who is NOT advertising. For they know that he is probably due for a deficit. Likewise, INVESTORS will look more and more keenly into the Advertising Policies of Corporations whose bonds and stocks are offered for sale. Before you buy a security issued by any corporation, study not only its assets but its advertising. Other things being comparable, I prefer the bonds and stocks of the big national advertisers. This goes to-day, and will be even more vital in the years ahead.

“Other judges and juries may be swayed by various influences, but the stock-market is singularly hard-boiled. It registers but one sentiment and responds to but one golden string; namely, profits. You can, therefore, give considerable weight to the stock-market's views on national advertisers. If you chart, as I have

done, the average price of all stocks on the New York Stock Exchange, the course from 1923 to the end of 1927 will be represented by a tortuous line slowly rising from 60 to about 77. On the same chart the average price of the stocks of a group of the most prominent national advertisers is shown by an impressive upward swing from 73 to about 210. Here is evidence which is severely practical and cold-blooded. The stock-market may err for short intervals and for individual companies, but it appraises with great fidelity the group values over a prolonged period. The stock-market is one of the most convincing advertisements of the value of advertising."


If you number a banker among your acquaintances, as most of us can without boasting, it is suggested that you read the foregoing paragraphs aloud to him in a clear, ringing voice.

Advertising could hardly be improved in 1759, it was a main support and a most natural channel in 1792, it became extremely po-

tent around 1900, and now, in 1928, it is being advertised by that most conservative of advertisers, the stock-market.

We are getting on.

Good Advertising *—and Not So Good*



III

PEOPLE speak of having faith in advertising as if it were some new and fantastic cult.

The chief trouble is that it is too often considered as something apart, something to be added to a business or left off; that you can either take it or leave it alone.

Good advertising is really an integral part of a business. It isn't something to please the president like putting his picture on the letter-head. It isn't a rabbit's foot in the pocket of every salesman. It isn't something to provide a job for the boss's nephew.

It is a vital force which has a direct effect

upon every department of a business. Once having acquired that view-point, a business man no longer treats it as a toy. He doesn't feel that it is merely a capricious plaything, half cleverness and half mystery, which sometimes smiles and often frowns.

Consider these two uses of advertising—one silly and expensive, the other sensible and an economy.

A man in an eastern city made something which sold very well in the neighboring states. As he motored around within a few hundred miles of his home he found his product in every store.

"If only we sold all over the country the way we do in this section, what a wonderful business we would have!" he told himself.

So he was easily persuaded to expand his business and cover the whole country. He and his advisers evolved a programme of advertising, with most of the appropriation to be spent in large space in national magazines.

One little thing which they overlooked was

to see to it that stores over the whole country had the manufacturer's product.

That's not as easy as it sounds. Merchants don't give three rousing cheers when they hear that a new manufacturer has entered the market. Eventually they are glad to put on their shelves a product which is well made and carries a fair profit and which is capably and sincerely advertised. But in a drug-store to-day you will find from 8,000 to 13,000 items. It has five or six brands of shaving-soap, six or eight lines of candy, many kinds of perfume, tooth-paste, and talcum powder. A grocery-store in a town of 30,000 people will carry about 4,000 items. A well-stocked store in a large city has nearly twice as many as that.

And so getting a new product into the stores, especially when an unknown manufacturer is doing it, is about as simple as persuading a taxi-driver to stay off Sixth Avenue.

But it can be done, only this manufacturer didn't bother to do it. Instead he decided to

let national advertising send so many people into the stores asking for his product that the storekeepers would sprain their wrists writing telegrams for fast shipments.

Telegrams like that *can* happen. They have happened. But to build an advertising programme on the certainty that they will happen is not so good.

This manufacturer and his advertising advisers took a lot of trouble with their advertisements; and very nice advertisements they were, too. Then everybody sat still and waited for the magazine to go on the news-stands and for the telegrams to start coming.

Nothing much happened. And a year later, when an advertising man went to see this manufacturer, this is what he heard:

“Advertising? No, siree! Not for us. We tried it about a year ago and there’s nothing in it. We’re saving our money now!”

And another tombstone went up in the graveyard of advertising failures. The fault of

advertising? Just as much as it is the fault of a good locomotive when an engineer runs into a blind switch.

Now, a second instance.

A new man was elected president of a company making hats for men. He noticed that when a salesman started out on a trip, his baggage looked like what a movie-star brings back from Paris. There were trunks and trunks and trunks. Each salesman carried enough sample hats to cover the uncrowned heads of Europe. No two were alike.

"Must we make so many different kinds of hats?" asked the new president.

"Sure," he was told. "People in different parts of the country like different kinds of hats. Not only that, almost all of the stores which buy our hats like a lot of individuality."

"But I can't tell the difference between most of these hats," said the president.

"After you have been in the hat business a while," they replied soothingly, "you will be able to find the difference."

“Heaven forbid,” murmured the president.

He went to the factory and said to the superintendent:

“We don’t make very many of any one kind of hat, do we?”

“As many as we can. But it’s mostly separate orders. You see, our dealers are very finicky. They all have their own ideas.”

“Do you think the men who wear these hats want so many different kinds?”

“Well, there aren’t any great differences,” answered the superintendent.

“Then why do we make all these little changes?”

“You know how it is,” was the answer. “One salesman asks for this and another one asks for that, and we keep adding to the line and it gets bigger and bigger.”

“How many different styles are we making this season?”

“Forty-six styles—in nine different colors.”

“Four hundred and fourteen different hats!” exclaimed the president. “We must stop mak-

ing each kind of hat just about as soon as we begin."

"It takes a lot of changing, all right," answered the superintendent. "Changing machinery, changing furs, changing dyes, changing ribbons and leathers and labels."

"If you could work all day long on just one hat, could you make more hats in a day?"

"Could we? Just give us the chance!"

"I think I shall," said the new president.

So far he had discovered that two important savings could be made if the line could be simplified. First came the saving in salesmen's time and in excess baggage charges. Second, savings in the factory.

But that was only the start. In the accounting department, for instance, he found that the system needed to make out bills and keep accounts on four hundred and fourteen styles, to say nothing of the different sizes for each hat, was about as simple as the Dawes plan. In every department there were ways in which

savings could be made. Everywhere the president found that the idea of simplification would be welcomed.

There was only one doubt in every one's mind. What would the hat wearer think?

"Honestly, I don't believe he gives a hoot," said the president. "What does he care whether the brim is an eighth of an inch wider or narrower and just how high the crown is? He knows what color he wants, probably, but if the hat looks well he won't fuss much over a sixteenth of an inch in width of the ribbon. I'll bet most men will take our word for the style—if we tell them and show them the hat."

"But we can't bring them all to the factory," objected the superintendent.

"Then we'll take the hat to them."

"How?"

"By advertising," said the president.

So the hat for the coming season was designed. It was shown in advance to the storekeepers in the principal cities and to all of the

salesmen. They contributed several good suggestions to make it a popular hat, for they knew what most men preferred.

Then the advertising was planned around that one hat. It was shown life-size in all of the advertisements. No other hat was shown.

When the salesmen went on their trips they carried half as many samples as usual. They showed The Hat first. They sold some of it to every merchant. They sold a lot of it to many merchants.

So, when the advertising appeared, every store selling that manufacturer's hat showed The Hat in his window with display-cards announcing that this was the finest hat of the season.

It worked. This manufacturer had never sold more than 15 per cent of any one style in a season. The first season in which a single leading style was featured the percentage jumped to over 35 per cent. After five seasons of the same policy, more than two-thirds of all the

hats of that maker were of the one featured style.

That manufacturer now does 90 per cent of his business on seven styles in ten colors. More than that, the savings effected in every department of the business increased the profits of the company so that a stagnant company badly in debt was able to pay off its bank loans, start paying dividends, and, at the same time, even though labor and hat fur both increased in cost, *actually reduce the price of hats!*

Specifically, the company did \$1,500,000 worth of business the year before the new president arrived. On the average \$500,000 was tied up in raw materials. Last year they did over \$4,000,000, with an average of \$200,000 invested in raw materials.

Advertising was built into that business in every department. The policy of simplification never could have been accomplished without it, for success depended wholly upon inviting the wearer of hats to buy the featured hat, and

inviting him so persuasively that he would do it. Advertising helped to accomplish what the factory never could have accomplished alone, nor the accounting department, nor even the sales department.

So you see, advertising is not something apart, something existing for its own sake. It is a force which exerts an influence all through a business—from the inventor's blueprints to the accountant's balance sheet. It makes everybody's job a little easier, a little smoother, a little more profitable.

Persuasion in Names

IV

PEOPLE will do what you want them to if you tell them persuasively enough and keep on telling them. There's nothing new in that. Even the sound of a name has its influence. A rose by any other name might smell as sweet, but would it sell as well if it were called a begonia or a salpiglossis?

A professor of history is authority for the statement that in 1468, when the Portuguese explorer, Dias, returned from his trip around the southern cape of Africa, he reported to his monarch that he had named it "The Cape of Storms and Torrents."

But the King was a wise old person.

“If you call it that,” he said, “no one will ever go there. I will tell you what to call it. Call it ‘The Cape of Good Hope.’ ”

So they did. And people have been going there ever since.

Why Women Read

Advertisements

V

WHEN Lady Astor urged the women of England to "Buy Gloriously" no one knew precisely whether she meant to buy extravagantly, furiously, wholeheartedly, or just wisely. But if it was her intention to urge them to buy with glory to themselves, she was advising them merely to follow the plan which American women have pursued for years. For here, in this country, where women do nearly all of the shopping, a curious situation of mutual confidence has developed. The women of America and the manufacturers of America have come to understand one another perfectly. And the basis of their understanding is advertising.

Occasionally you hear a group of solemn American business men arguing about advertising. If their wives are present you have probably noticed that, as wives will, they are quietly carrying on a conversation of their own.

"So after lunch," one of them is saying, "I went down to Mastick & Pratt's to get some of those blankets they advertised in last evening's paper, and——"

"But didn't you stop in at Folwell's to-day?" interrupts another. "They had a demonstrator in their toilet-goods department selling Evelyn Lockwood's Preparations. They certainly are the best creams and lotions! They had an announcement of it in this morning's *Dispatch*."

"They did? I must have missed it," chimes in a third wife. "It certainly doesn't pay to skip through your paper, does it?"

"She's there the rest of the week," answers a fourth home-purchasing agent. It is her husband who has the floor in the centre of the cigar-smoke.

"You can't talk to me," he is saying. "We

tried advertising once and I know. Took a quarter of a page in one of the big magazines and nothing happened but a lot of letters."

"Perhaps if you had kept it up long enough to let people know you were advertising, you——"

But the wives are at it again. To them advertising isn't an abstract subject for discussion. It is the news of their business—the business of housekeeping.

"How do you like your washing-machine?" asks one.

"It's marvellous! And Hulda—you remember how Hulda objected when I told her I was going to get one?"

There is a general laugh at Hulda's well-known aversion to new contraptions.

"Well, now," the speaker goes on, "now she wants to know if I won't get her something that will iron the clothes as well as this washes them—and she insists that we take it with us when we go to the lake this summer!"

"Wait till I get the new number of one of

the magazines that came to-day," exclaims the hostess. "I want to show you a picture of a washing-machine and see if it's the same as yours."

And so the evening passes, and through the haze the men who are puzzled about advertising could find the answer if they only stopped talking long enough to hear what their wives are saying.

Not so many years ago most American women were pretty busy doing the things that manufacturers are doing for them to-day. Your great-grandmother, helping her husband to gain a foothold in a new clearing, killed and dressed her own meat, ground her own flour, made her own soap, wove her own cloth. Everything else to eat came out of the soil—with some persuasion. Shoes were bought from a wandering cobbler or made at home. Families were large and the day started before dawn and ended by candle-light, when the needle grew too heavy for tired hands to hold.

Women were old at forty and soon passed

on, while their hardier husbands chose younger, stronger helpmates to take up the burden.

"Why did you get married again so soon?" some one asked a Middle-Western farmer a month after his first wife died forty years ago.

"Well," was the answer, "it was either that or get a hired girl."

No wonder women on farms and in small towns and in Louisville and Atlanta and Seattle said to American industry:

"We are tired of growing everything we eat and of making everything we wear and use. Why can't we go into the nearest store and buy what we need when we need it?"

Industry replied:

"We can make anything. But we are in Camden or Troy or Chicago. Even though we can put what we make into stores near you, how can we get you to go in and ask for it?"

And the reply was:

"You might tell us."

And advertising is the maker's way of telling them.

“Under its stimulation,” said Calvin Coolidge in his address to the American Association of Advertising Agencies in Washington in 1926, “the country has gone from the old hand methods of production which were so slow and laborious, with high unit costs and low wages, to our present great factory system and its mass production with the astonishing result of low unit costs and high wages. The pre-eminence of America in industry, which has constantly brought about a reduction of costs, has come very largely through mass production. Mass production is possible only where there is mass demand. Mass demand has been created almost entirely through the development of advertising.

“In former days goods were expected to sell themselves. Oftentimes they were carried from door to door. Otherwise, they were displayed on the shelves and counters of the merchants. The public was supposed to know of these sources of supply and depend on themselves for

their knowledge of what was to be sold. Modern business could neither have been created nor can it be maintained on any such system. It constantly requires publicity. It is not enough that goods are made—a demand for them must also be made. It is on this foundation of enlarging production through the demands created by advertising that very much of the success of the American industrial system rests.”

Of itself and for itself it is of no more importance than a third rail before the current is turned on. It is the vehicle which carries the message; that’s all. No woman ever says to herself:

“Now I must look through all of these advertisements to see what a lot of things these manufacturers want to sell me.”

In fact it isn’t at all difficult to argue yourself into the belief that nobody reads advertisements anyway, that only an occasional person glances at them, and that probably the whole thing is wasted and if manufacturers

were wise they would save their money and leave you alone.

Having arrived at that conclusion you start to turn away entirely satisfied when one or two disturbing little thoughts like these pluck at your sleeve:

Why should one make of phonograph have outdistanced the others in less than twenty years?

How can certain brands of soup and breakfast food and motor-cars and linoleum and talcum powder and coffee and radio and refrigerators be found all over the country?

Why do most people think of just one certain kind when you mention an alarm-clock?

Does one sort of soap just happen to be in every grocery-store? And vacuum cleaners and kitchen stoves and mops and writing-paper and candy—how do you happen to think of one or two outstanding names whenever these things are mentioned?

And what became of that laundry soap which used to have its name on every fence-

rail and that breakfast food with the funny man on the package and that dentrifice on your grandmother's wash-stand?

Stripping it down to its essentials, the story in each case is identical:

Some manufacturers have kept on telling American women and some have stopped.

They made a good product, yes. They packed it well and shipped it well, yes.

They sent out salesmen with samples to show to the retail storekeeper, yes. But some of them found that, having done all these things, women wouldn't buy unless it was explained why they should. Why should they?

Some makers found, too, that if they did tell the American woman, the American woman would buy.

Then a curious new discovery was made. It was that they could multiply their sales without multiplying their cost in the same proportion.

It costs a doctor just ten times as much to set ten broken arms as one. But the man who

makes the surgeon's gauze to wrap around those arms finds that he can make enough for ten arms at much less than ten times the cost of gauze for one arm.

So manufacturers found that if they could sell by the car-load instead of by the handful, each thing they made cost less.

Advertising, it follows, is useful because it enables a manufacturer to make and sell more economically than he could without advertising; or to keep his price the same in the face of rising costs of raw materials and labor.

A man who makes a product selling exclusively to women worked for three solid years in his laboratory and mills before he produced a sample which satisfied him. It was based on thousands of interviews with women in their own homes where they were asked to tell exactly what kind of product they wanted.

With the satisfactory sample in his hand this manufacturer gave orders to buy an experimental automatic machine costing \$20,000.

"I will need ten of those to turn out enough

of this product to sell it at fifty cents," he said.

A famous cake of soap still sells at ten cents to American women, though the workmen who make it are paid three or four times as much as they were fifteen years ago. Mass production makes this possible.

Advertising is useful because it enables a manufacturer to make and sell more economically than he could without advertising; or, as a corollary, to keep his price the same in the face of rising costs of raw materials and labor.

To be successful any business must make a profit. And the profit of any business, as A. W. Shaw, of *The Magazine of Business*, has often expressed it, is the sum of many profits or savings in every department of a business. Anything that can let a manufacturer buy more cheaply because he buys in larger quantities; anything that can make his salesmen sell more rapidly and carry less baggage; anything that can lower the cost of his credit department by making merchants want to pay his bills promptly so that they can get more of his mer-

chandise; anything that can make the public prefer his product because they know it will be as good to-day as it was yesterday; anything that does all of these things contributes to every department of a business. And that something is advertising.

There are probably some manufacturers who have failed to pass on to the public the savings which advertising has helped them to get from mass production.

But these facts stand out:

The great majority of advertisers are those successful manufacturers who have kept faith with the American public.

They have made products of uniform merit and the American woman knows that when she moves from one city to another or when she goes to a summer resort or when she is visiting in a strange community, she can go into the nearest store and buy the products she has known back at home and they will be exactly the same.

She carries a certain trade-mark in her mem-

ory and that trade-mark, she knows, is the manufacturer's pledge to her.

Her experience has told her that after she has tried several kinds of things and settled on the one she likes best, it is better for her to keep on buying the one that carries her favorite brand than to accept one of uncertain quality under a strange name.

Think of the name of your car. If you are thinking of buying a new one and if a salesman drives up to your door to-morrow and tells you that it is the new Jones Automobile, exactly like the one you want and *twenty dollars cheaper*, wouldn't you say to him:

"All right, young man, but the next car we get will be another of the same old make. We *know* that car!"

Women are saying much the same thing all over the country every day in every kind of store. They know that if a grocer offers them Brown's Beans or Robinson's Pickles or Jones's Soup instead of the kind they recognize instantly, he hasn't much chance to make a sale.

The sensible merchant doesn't try to urge customers to take something they don't want. One of the biggest chains of stores in the country, after years of trying to sell their own brands instead of better-known packages, has recently told its store-managers to put forward the nationally advertised brands.

A merchant may say very frankly:

"Here is a new kind of jam. We hear very good things about it and I wish you would try it and tell me what you think."

Most women will respond to that. And if the merchant is honest in his trial of a good new product, his customer may find that she has found a new friend—particularly if the maker thought enough of his product to tell her the news about it in sincere, convincing advertising.

Recently a theory has been advanced that women are incompetent to judge the relative merit of various products and that there should be little groups of scientists scattered over the

country to grade everything so that women will know what to buy and what not to buy.

Women have been buying a good many things for some time and very likely they have their own ideas about whether they need some one to stand at their elbows to guide them. But suppose we pass that over for the time being and consider this:

Where is the manufacturer who would be willing to invest a half million dollars in a factory and machinery and raw materials and labor and then ask the good scientists to tell him whether he could sell or not? When he finally turned out one sample of his new product and had it examined and graded by this scientific group, suppose they marked him one point below another maker. What is he supposed to do? Tear down his factory and lose half a million dollars?

No one can control human initiative as autocratically as that. And it's a lucky thing for the American woman that no one can—or she

would still be performing most of the tasks that sent her great-grandmother swiftly from girlhood to old age.

Where would modern invention be if it had been under the thumb of a paternalism as ruthless as that? Why should research laboratories keep striving to improve the conditions of American living if they were to have no reward but the opinions of a few judges as humanly fallible as the inventors themselves? Look around your own home and see what burdens just one industry, the electrical industry, has lifted from American women's shoulders. Have research and experiment been worth while or should such enterprise be smothered?

Women read advertisements because women are the purchasing agents of the American home. They need information on which to base their selections, and advertising supplies that information.

They may find reliable firms which do not advertise. But they know that when a firm does advertise it is putting the pledge of its busi-

ness integrity behind its advertising. Experience has shown them that the company which puts itself on record is surer to play fair.

Because women do most of the buying for the home it is through them that our standards of living are improved. They are the ones who welcomed the inventions that made home management a job for the head rather than the hands and knees. And who wouldn't?

Occasionally you find some one who bemoans this emancipation. To this type of person it is all wrong for women to be allowed to urge their husbands to greater earning capacity so that the whole family can be better clad, can eat and sleep and live more luxuriously. Women, according to this school of thinking, shouldn't suggest new cars, new bathrooms, new hats, new houses, new coats for the children.

Well, Calvin Coolidge has never been considered a waster or a spendthrift. And it was Calvin Coolidge who summed it up pretty thoroughly when he pointed out the relation

between woman's desires and our national prosperity in these words:

“It is to be seen that advertising is not an economic waste. It ministers to the true development of trade. It is no doubt possible to waste money through wrong methods of advertising as it can be wasted through wrong methods in any department of industry. But rightfully applied, it is the method by which the desire is created for better things. When that once exists, new ambition is developed for the creation and use of wealth. The uncivilized make little progress because they have few desires. The inhabitants of our country are stimulated to new wants in all directions. In order to satisfy their constantly increasing desires they necessarily expand their productive power. They create more wealth because it is only by that method that they can satisfy their wants. It is this constantly enlarging circle that represents the increasing progress of civilization.”

Testimonials

VI

RECENTLY in Franklin P. Adams's column in the New York *World* appeared a couple of paragraphs devoted to Vincent Richards's article in *Liberty* telling why he turned professional.

"Queens indorse cold-cream," said Mr. Richards. "Actresses praise pipe-tobacco. Society women pose in the latest clothes. They all get paid for their statements, but no one thinks it unethical."

"Footfault," replied F. P. A. "There are a good many of us who think it unethical; some of us consider it downright crooked, not only in the person who indorses this or that with-

out knowing anything about it, and signs her name as a user of something she doesn't use, never has used, and never will use; but also in the concern bribing the indorser."

To one who has never believed in the use of the paid testimonial, these are encouraging signs. Changes in thought about advertising practice come gradually. When enough people believe one way, the rest just have to come over. The elimination of paid testimonials from advertising will not be accomplished by resolutions or legislation. It will come about when enough people realize that it hurts the believability of all the rest of advertising.

Anything which discredits all advertising ought to be eliminated. Paid testimonials certainly discredit legitimate testimonials. And yet there is no stronger form of advertising than the legitimate voluntary testimonial—rare though it is. A surprising number of advertising men read protests against testimonials with great pleasure. Such protests express very vividly what they always have been saying and

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practising in their daily work. They will be a little amazed at the white heat frequently displayed, because the critics seem to be under the impression that they have discovered something new. Advertising men have been far ahead of the critics in their aversion to this type of advertising. They have been refraining from using it, talking against, advising against it.

One of the world's really great pianists is an inventor. He has patented and sold a great number of devices used to-day on automobiles. He receives a large income from his royalties on inventions. Experimenting in a mechanical laboratory is only a hobby with this musician, but it is a very paying hobby. A certain radio manufacturer sent a receiving-set to this pianist after he had played for one of the manufacturer's broadcasting concerts. Presently came the strongest possible letter of indorsement from this musician. He was speaking voluntarily and he was speaking as an authority on electro-mechanism as well as music. His was the kind of testimonial that all others pretend to be.

No one had asked him for it. He was not in need of publicity. He was prompted to write it only by his admiration for another man's craftsmanship. He composed it himself and wrote it with his own hand. Some letters like that come to every good manufacturer, many to some. More power to them and to their use in advertising. They are genuine, sincere, convincing.

The first step away from this ideal form is the passive testimonial. A book about to be published is sent to a list of celebrities, who are asked to give their opinions. The assumption is that they are to like it. And right there we encounter a very human trait which accounts for a great share of the non-voluntary testimonials. It is this:

Many people are so glad to see their names and their pictures in print, either because they feel that it helps them socially or in their business or because they just like publicity, that they are only too happy to say a few kind words about a new book or a new play or any other piece of respectable merchandise.

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From this, it is hardly a full step to the person who never saw nor used the piece of merchandise but who by some agreeable excuse is inveigled into accepting a check for indorsing it—for charity or as a nest-egg for a child or as a favor to a persuasive young person who makes her living by pleading that she can get a good job if she can get a few women of Mrs. Vandergift's type to recommend this product.

This is very mild compared to the next step, which is taken whole-heartedly and with one bound by the people who see the commercial possibilities in this situation and grab them. Then you get the wholesale indorsers. Lindbergh was and is the refreshing exception. But you needn't fly to France to have the chance to collect assorted sums. Recently an agent appeared in advertising circles with an amazing list of names—unbelievably prominent in the world's corridors of fame—all of whom would indorse nearly anything at \$5,000 per eulogy. And you know how cigarette-smoking helps the voice.

In the speech before the American Association of Advertising Agencies in 1925, Mr. Earnest Elmo Calkins, one of its members, said among other things worth heeding:

“The very fact that this traffic exists, the very fact that testimonials can be bought in that offhand manner, and that publicity or money is traded to actresses, society women, and professional beauties in return for an insincere indorsement of a product of which they know nothing, the mere fact that the service exists and that knowledge of the service can become public property, not only vitiates confidence in that kind of advertising but undermines all advertising. A rotten apple standing next to a sound one will cause the sound one to rot. Rotten advertising running in publications alongside of sound advertising will affect the sound and cause it to rot in the public mind.”

It seems fairly evident, thank goodness, that the life of these testimonials is pretty definitely limited. Most advertising men will be sincerely glad when it will be as impossible to think of a

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good advertising agency's publishing a paid testimonial as it is now to think of its handling the advertising of a stock swindle or a tuberculosis cure.

The point worth remembering particularly is that changes of this kind occur only when there is a sentiment in their favor within the group of people most affected. That sentiment exists and is growing rapidly.

From a casual reading of criticisms of advertising, you would hardly suspect that this is so. There lies the danger of generalizations. There are two explanations for it: Either these critics delight in seizing upon a few sensational and isolated episodes from which they can spring into a generalization; or they like to shut their eyes deliberately to a true, full picture of the facts because they believe that to make a point you must give yourself a safe margin of exaggeration. Apparently no one has ever explained to them that to be heard in the market-place it is sometimes better not to shout but to whisper.

It seems to be possible to find lawyers will-

ing to take either side of the most scandalous legal cases. But that doesn't mean that the legal profession is to be judged by their standards. Perhaps surgeons can be found who are willing to split the fee with the doctor who recommends the operation. But humanity's debt to the medical profession is not cancelled by this isolated case, even if it exists. You may even find an accountant who is willing to falsify an income-tax statement. But that doesn't mean that there aren't thousands of honest C. P. A.'s. Advertising has a right to be judged, too, by the prevailing sentiment rather than by the culpable exception.

Smoky Reasoning



VII

JUST now any one who doesn't have to worry about it can wonder what must be going on in the minds of those who are apparently trying to decide whether you can advertise cigarettes to women.

Women are smoking as they drive through the traffic of New York in their own limousines and even in taxicabs. It's not at all unusual to see the solitary and bejewelled occupant of an expensive car crossing her silken knees nonchalantly as she holds a cigarette to her carefully rouged lips.

Between the acts, the lobbies of New York's theatres have gone coeducational. The exodus

used to be masculine. To-night it's nearly fifty-fifty.

The other morning, on the platform of a suburban station near New York, a man and his wife stood waiting for a train. He was looking at the head-lines of his paper. She was smoking a cigarette. Down the platform a little way another man and his wife cast slightly soiled glances and muttered.

These same critics would have offered cigarettes to their dinner-guests. But the public display of a custom which has just about ceased to create comment in private was more than they could stand without indicating disapproval.

The British illustrated papers make no bones about it. In editorial illustrations and in advertisements they picture feminine smokers without signs of restraint.

And yet, in this country, we have had this curious, tip-toe approach. We have had dear old ladies doing their embroidery on twenty-four sheets. We have had clusters of American beauties, including an American beauty herself.

We have had suggestion, association of ideas, subconscious concepts. The rough sketches must have been made by psychologists.

And then out of a clear sky came one cigarette saying right out in a loud voice that Schumann-Heink, Fritzi Scheff, Lenore Ulric, and goodness knows how many others, actually smoked. Think of it! Women smoking!

Some of them even intimated that if you ever expected to amount to much as a singer, you might as well take a good long drag on one of these same cigarettes.

After some of these advertisements had been appearing for a few weeks the New York papers told of an application to organize a "Tobacco Society for Voice Culture."

"The apparent purpose of the application," said the New York *World*, "was to ridicule cigarette advertising which uses testimonials from singers."

The application was turned down by the Court as "frivolous."

All of which causes one to wonder:

Why can't cigarette advertising be approached like any other advertising situation? Why can't cigarettes be advertised to women where women smoke?

And why can't it be advertised in a way that is believable?

A magazine publisher may decide that his readers in inland cities and in the country do not share New York's frank attitude toward women's smoking. Therefore he excludes cigarette advertising. Why not? He knows or should know what his readers like and want.

It's certainly his prerogative to fix the policies of his own property. But if he decides to admit cigarette advertising to his pages, he may find, as some publishers are reported to have found, that a surprisingly small number of readers are annoyed by it. One man who expected an avalanche received in the month after publication exactly seven letters from a circulation that is numbered by the millions.

Later a few more letters drifted in, but not many. The surprising part of it was the re-

strait of these protests. The writers were not shocked. They frankly faced the fact that women smoke. What they minded was the implication that smoking is good for the throat. They pointed out that there may be doctors who say that it doesn't hurt the voice, but they wondered whether any doctor could be found who would say that it actually ever did anybody's voice any good.

Most of us are not concerned with deciding whether to admit cigarette advertising into the columns of a magazine. Most of us are not concerned with the most effective way to walk the slack wire of cigarette copy without falling off. But all of us in the advertising business are concerned with trends that injure the credibility of all advertising.

Just now there are a number of copy fads that strain the credulity of any sensible person. Some of them are lazy-minded—using an old formula in a new way, Portia in Modern Dress. Some of them are ingenious. Most of them are just a little too shrewd to be good for

advertising or, when it comes to that, good as advertising.

The last word has not been said when the reply is made, with a shrug, that these things boost sales.

A shot of strychnine is very stimulating, too.

Twelve-Cylinder Critics

VIII

SUPPOSE we go a little deeper into the objections to the American situation voiced by the critics of American business. Does it really help matters much to fling our arms to high heaven and shriek so? All of us are here whether we like it or not. Is it better to retire to our libraries and write pieces about how discouraging everything is or to do an honest day's work in the thick of things? The great American habit of rushing around is not particularly new. People have been discovering it since long before Charles Dickens came here and remarked: "By the way, whenever an Englishman would cry 'All right!' an American cries 'Go ahead!'" which is somewhat expressive

of the national character of the two countries.”

People who come to New York for a week from the great interior are always supposed to sigh as they board the train for home:

“New York’s a wonderful place to visit, but I’d never want to live here. I don’t see how you keep it up!”

And of course New Yorkers don’t. It’s a tradition that New Yorkers never step out except to lead their country cousins into the white lights’ glare. And some of them don’t. You can be as provincial as you like within two minutes’ walk of any night club.

The pace of these United States seems as headlong to some people as New York’s gait seems to the visitors from Toledo and Denver and Oconomowoc. Many Americans think that other Americans are hurrying pell-mell and getting nowhere. They wish their countrymen would stop stepping on the gas and enjoy the scenery. And even though they drive slowly themselves they complain that the view is spoiled by a bill-board. But they overlook a num-

ber of things. America isn't composed of one kind of civilization. You can take your pick. If a bill-board spoils your view, you can read a book until your train gets out where they are few and far between. Or, if you are motoring, you can think serene thoughts until the road turns. If you hate to mingle with the cutting-up trade at the rush hour, you can buy an abandoned farm and spend your life before an open fire. The rural free delivery will pass your door to carry your manuscripts to market and bring back the checks.

The conditions of modern American life have simply evolved. They have their roots far back in the motives that brought the early settlers to this country, in the European environment from which they were escaping, and in the obstacles that confronted them. There has been no house-committee making rules to discomfort the members.

No one has said, "Let's all be go-getters." Our forefathers were obliged both to go and to get. We have inherited an urge.

It's not unnatural that in the general mix-up there has been a tendency to lose sight of what we were going after and to think that the mere act of go-getting had something worthy about it. Here is a country in which the population has doubled in forty-five years. When the Civil War began there were only 32,000,000 people in all of the thirty-four States. When Charles Dickens visited us in 1842, the whole country had no more people in it than New York and Illinois have to-day.

Allan Nevins in his *American Social History* quotes that observation by Mr. Dickens with many others that are revealing for those who think that the go-getter has come into existence only since Peter B. Kyne wrote about a blue vase and since the Rotarians started having lunch together. For example, this account of a breakfast scene at Niblo's Hotel in New York is taken from Thomas Hamilton's *Men and Manners in America*, published in 1833:

"The contrast of the whole scene, with that of an English breakfast-table, was striking

enough. Here was no loitering nor lounging; no dipping into newspapers; no apparent lassitude of appetite; no intervals of repose in mastication; but all was hurry, bustle, clamor, and voracity, and the business of repletion went forward, with a rapidity altogether unexampled. The strenuous efforts of the company were, of course, soon rewarded with success. Departures, which had begun even before I took my place at the table, became every instant more numerous, and in a few minutes the hall had become what Moore beautifully describes in one of his songs, 'a banquet-hall deserted.' "

Five years earlier a British Naval Officer, Captain Basil Hall, has something to tell us about another manifestation of early American speed. This time it wasn't cramming American food into American mouths; it was cramming American words into the English language.

Captain Hall and a gentleman in New Haven were talking about Americanisms and the British visitor thought there were enough words already. But his host replied:

“ ‘Nevertheless, it is quite impossible to stop the progress of language—it is like the course of the Mississippi, the motion of which, at times, is scarcely perceptible; yet even then it possesses a momentum quite irresistible. It is the same with the language we are speaking of. Words and expressions will be forced into use, in spite of all the exertions of all the writers in the world.’

“ ‘Yes,’ I observed,” continues Captain Hall, “ ‘but surely such innovations are to be deprecated?’

“ ‘I don’t know that,’ he replied. ‘If a word becomes universally current in America, where English is spoken, why should it not take its station in the language?’

“ ‘Because,’ I said, ‘there are words enough already; and it only confuses matters, and hurts the cause of letters to introduce such words.’

“ ‘But,’ said he, reasonably enough, ‘in England such things happen currently, and, in process of time, your new words find their way across the Atlantic, and are incorporated in

the language here. In like manner,' he added, 'many of our words, heretofore not used in England, have gradually crept in there, and are now an acknowledged part of the language. The interchange, in short, is inevitable; and, whether desirable or not, cannot be stopped, or even essentially modified.' "

The New Haven gentleman to whom Captain Hall was talking was at that moment engaged in turning out a volume which has enjoyed a steady, not to say popular, sale ever since. He was writing the dictionary and his name was Noah Webster.

People are still differing about dictionaries. And countries are still differing about many things. In Paris the other day they had a big parade of protest. A mob swept through the streets to call upon the French Academy because the men who were getting out the new dictionary were going to leave out the word *midinette*. In our country *midinettes* don't care if we never get out another dictionary so long

as we don't take away their tabloids. But they look at things differently in France. France is the country, you will remember, where not long ago they unveiled a beautiful monument to a Camembert cheese.

A lot of things have happened to these United States since Charles Dickens was here—things which have made us hurry. One wave of immigration after another hit us. The incoming Germans doubled their numbers from 1881 to 1890. The Irish were already here, and coming strong. The Italians began their inrush in the late eighties. In the decade from 1820 to 1830 less than 130,000 foreign-born people arrived. From 1910 to 1920 nearly 6,500,000 arrived. Since the World War the "transient" immigrant has all but disappeared. Even before that, two-thirds of those who came liked it so much that they stayed.

A man around forty has watched this country do its best to digest this wave of immigration, as well as automobiles, washing-machines,

vacuum cleaners, macadam roads, airplanes, subways, radio, telephones, electric railroads, the movies, typewriters, and modern advertising.

Is it any wonder that older and less adaptable civilizations laugh when they see us running up our own escalators? We can't wait. Things will catch up with us and pass us by if we don't hurry. All right, suppose they do. Many of them don't matter, anyway. Let's not be swept off our feet—not even by a desire to curse at the speed of American civilization. It just can't help going so fast. Everything that has happened since our forefathers had to claw a living out of the wilderness has made it hurry. We can't stop its momentum by grouching about it. If we don't want to run, let's walk or sit down and rest. But if we do, let's not complain because the rest of this country of ours doesn't sit down and rest, too.

Is it any wonder that each of us looks at things from his own view-point? Is it any won-

der that the hardest job is to try to keep them sorted out?

One of the New York papers recently contained this piece of news:

“Advertising,” said the Rev. S. Parkes Cadman to the weekly luncheon of the Rotary Club at the Waldorf, “is a thing of imagination and is advancing in beauty and execution every day.”

That’s one side, and the other is that an advertising man has written a book about religion and people have bought it by the hundreds of thousands. The dominie tells us all about advertising and the advertising man writes religion. What a country! And then we come to the closing sentence of the news item. It says:

“Rotary bowed its head for one minute in memory of Ernest R. Ball, who wrote ‘Mother Machree.’ ”

Of course, it sounds as if it came from the Americana section of the *American Mercury*.

But wait a minute. Are we so ready to laugh at the Rotary Clubs because they are really funny or because some one tells us they are?

Remember that monument to a Camembert cheese? That made us smile, too. But when the farmers around that village of Camembert found that they were poor because they couldn't find any way to sell the excess milk which their cows produced, and when Marie Harel found a way of turning it into a delicious new sort of creamy cheese, then those farmers didn't laugh. They cheered. And so did their wives and children when the new comforts of life began to come in.

But we laugh because we've had it pounded into us that cheese is a comedy word, especially Camembert cheese. So is Rotary—to the wise-crackers.

"It is the basic mistake of our novelists," said Simon Strunsky recently in the *New York Times*, "to assume that Babbitt takes his own patter more seriously than we do."

Did you read Booth Tarkington's *The Plu-*

tocrat? At first you probably hated that loud Middle-Western millionaire. But how he did straighten out before you as you grew to know him through Booth Tarkington's eyes! Things aren't so funny or so vicious or so curious when you really get to know them. Superficial impressions are nearly always misleading. Twelve-cylinder critics who grab a few symbols and generalize about them are about as reliable as these foreign novelists who visit the good hotels in New York, Chicago, and Hollywood, and then, after a month's visit, write a blast at American life. They just don't know American business. Coming upon it for the first time, they see the ancient evils and fail to realize that business itself has been cleaning house and has made itself as good as it is to-day. And that is really surprisingly good.

It's all right for every man to have his own view-point, but the danger lies in adopting a view-point the way a house adopts paint—by having some one lay it on. It's the fashion now to be captious about American business—espe-

cially about American business men. There seems to be a paying market for satire on the subject. The same kind of people who go into hysterics at the mention of the word "conference" are having some great laughs at things that are about as fresh and humorous to American business men as that "Hello, is Mr. Fish there?" joke must be to the telephone operator at the Aquarium.

People remote from business swallow whole the surface ideas advanced by the critics of business. Those of us who wear long, gray beards can remember when Elbert Hubbard published a little magazine called *The Philistine*. It was the wise-cracker of its day and all the bright boys could hardly wait until the next number came out. Now, we have Mr. Mencken's *American Mercury*. In ten years who will it be? Stuart Chase?

Few people actually move forward. They only change from one circle of bigotry to another. Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick was talking about that in one of his addresses recently.

He said that some of the younger generation declare that they want more freedom, when what they really want is to be allowed to conform to a new but just as binding set of standards. You know what he meant. The little cutie doesn't *really* want to dress as she pleases. She wants to dress like a John Held cover. Where's the freedom in that? If she painted her lips green instead of vermilion—or, which would be even more daring—didn't paint them at all, that would be freedom.

The world seems made up of different planes of poses. Each looks down on the one just over there, forgetting that the people on another plane somewhere up there are looking down on *it*.

Obviously, many of these critics are not posing. They are much too sincere for that. But they are being influenced, consciously or not, by the badly informed and smug people who pick up some catch phrases and put them into newspaper paragraphs or plays or funny papers to lambast business. Most of the people they

are lampooning have broken their own desks by pounding—and passed on. But the lam-basters have no way of knowing that, for they have no first-hand acquaintance with business.

For example, Stuart Chase in a recent article in the *Forum*, to which some of these paragraphs were offered in answer, had a great many things to say about advertising agencies. Most of them are no more typical of the good agencies of the country than machine-guns are typical of home life in Chicago. He is describing the appointment of an agency to market a manufacturer's product.

"Short of opium," says Mr. Chase, "and the more deadly varieties of arsenic, the agency accepts the mandate with enthusiasm."

First error. Any self-respecting agency looks at a prospective client's product with caution. A product of merit is the only one worth advertising. The fact that here and there an unworthy product has made a success through advertising does not disprove the rule that the

outstanding and permanent successes of advertising have been made for products of genuine merit. One agency in the past few months has asked to be excused from advertising an amusement enterprise spending \$1,000,000 annually in advertising, a real-estate undertaking of size and substance, any number of proprietary articles, and a new rubber heel which probably wouldn't give the public full value. Together they represented \$2,000,000 worth of advertising, refused for the very reason which Mr. Chase denies.

"No up-to-date advertising agency would think of doing business without the assistance of a staff of psychologists of the highest scientific attainments," says Mr. Chase.

Error number two. An excellent example of generalizing from an isolated case. There is one psychologist of high attainment in one New York advertising agency. So far as those familiar with many agencies know, his situation is unique. Again:

"The advertising agency applies the same laws in selling the sound with the shoddy," says Mr. Chase. And: "Instead of avoiding the opportunity as the ethics of the professional man have heretofore dictated, he accepts it eagerly. . . ."

Any number of cases could be cited to refute this third error. This incident is typical: Not so many years ago, an obscure copywriter was assigned the job of preparing some advertisements for a certain baby food. One reason for his selection was that there was a very new baby in his own home. He talked to a number of baby-specialists. He visited public clinics. He read Doctor Holt's big book as well as the small one that was ruling his home just then. And finally, a little white around the mouth, because he needed that job just then, he politely but flatly refused to write anything advocating that food for babies. Was he fired? Was he ground under the heel of his boss as Mr. Chase's working friends seem to be? He was

not. He was told to put his ideas in a memorandum so that the boss could explain to the client why the agency didn't want to advertise that food for babies.

Throughout Mr. Chase's writings run two characteristics—an incorrigible sentimentality for the good old days and a breathless desire to save the American people from the financial ruin of a "failing purchasing power." Full appreciation of the disaster can be obtained from the recent report of the Bureau of Internal Revenue published on November 3, 1927, in the New York *Times* with the heading "Highest Standard of Living in History Attained Last Year by American People." The dispatch of the Associated Press ran:

"The highest standard of living ever attained in the history of the world was reached last year by the American people," the Bureau of Internal Revenue said to-day, in a report showing that the 117,000,000 persons in the United States had a total income in 1926 of

nearly \$90,000,000,000, an increase of about \$27,000,000,000, or more than 43 per cent in the five years since 1921."

The Bureau's figures revealed an increase in the nation's income for each year since 1921, when a total of \$62,000,000,000 was recorded. . . .

"This great increase in income," the Bureau said, "is not the result of an increase in the price level, for the average price of consumed goods was actually slightly less in 1926 than in 1921."

You find his sentimentality expressed perhaps unconsciously in such phrases as "an odor of lavender and musk," "took in with its mother's milk," "kindly faced country storekeepers," "still revere the ancient code." Can you remember an old-fashioned grocery-store before modern sanitary packing came into existence? The sugar-barrel was open and the flies buzzed in and out. Crackers were exposed to the casual, grimy fingers of every idler. Tea and coffee were scooped out as they were

needed, and if their bins had covers, it was usually too much trouble to put them back. The cheese-knife lay in the dust on the counter. The cheese itself never seemed to wear its screen hat. Pickles and olives and butter lay in open tubs. Candy lost its sheen in open trays, but drew plenty of flies.

To-day the tins and bottles and cartons that line the shelves of a modern grocery are sealed. They bring to your table the products of farms and gardens and orchards. Those who see the places where their foods are prepared are always amazed at the sincerity of the standards. Nothing is too much trouble to insure a little greater cleanliness, a little surer sanitation, a little higher quality.

"If there is a better grade of flour, buy it," says the head of the largest bread-baking company to his purchasing agent.

To buy in bulk, even at a saving of a few pennies, and even disregarding the burden of added household labor, is unattractive to the American woman. For she knows that she

would be sacrificing her confidence in what her family is going to eat.

Were the good old days so good? Ask Rupert Hughes. Read William Mackay's diary of the early days of our Republic.

"How melancholy a thing it is," he murmurs, "that the liberties of men should be in the hands of such creatures! I cannot call them men." He is referring to the Federal fathers, excepting Washington.

Are you familiar with the "diverting practice of bundling" as described by W. E. Woodward? Almost any days have a way of looking good as they sink into retrospect. Even the '90s are now being described as gay.

Can it be possible that the explanation of Mr. Chase's admiration for former periods is not so much that he loves them as that they offer a useful contrast, a sure-fire contrast of simplicity, with no relatively greater merit to the present American scene? No one believes that American business is even remotely perfect. But is it any worse for Ivy Lee to give the world

a perhaps too favorable portrait of John D. Rockefeller than for Mr. Chase to give the world a too unfavorable picture of the American business man? You needn't go to Richmond or the Back Bay to find people doing a busy day's work in thousands of offices according to the code which Mr. Chase outlines. There may be one exception—his objection to the spokesman. Just what his authority is for including that is not quite clear. The amanuensis is old enough to have a Greek name. He can't accuse the modern American business man of inventing that institution.

In fact, in the good old days of American history there is one excellent precedent. A famous general, cornered in battle, was told by his aide that the enemy demanded his immediate surrender.

"Tell the blankety-blank-blank-blank to go to blank," remarked the general. Whereupon his aide wrote and dispatched a message which read: "American courage fights for ever!"

Finally, it may be well to observe a twelve-

cylinder critic out of the library. A certain member of this school of faultfinding, another twelve-cylinder critic (missing on two or three, perhaps), recently was invited to work out some of his ideas under practical conditions. He obtained a job under the watchful eye of another economist and was told to go ahead and economize. They gave him all the rope he wanted and it took him exactly three weeks to get so hopelessly snarled that it took several plain, hard-working business men a very, very long time to untangle the knots.

P. S.—He lost the job.

The Business of Creating Advertising

IX

ANY one who makes his living in the advertising business has had the experience of having his friends say many times:

“Advertising? That must be a very interesting game. I’ve often thought I might go into it sometime myself. In fact, I’m a great student of advertising. I often look over the ads in the back of the magazines. My brother-in-law was in it for a while out in Chicago. He was with a printer or something—wonder if you know him—McSweeney’s his name. Well, maybe he wasn’t in the same end of it as you are. . . . Just what do you do?”

Advertising men do many different things.

The easiest way to classify them is to put them into three groups. First, there are those who devote their time to selling the advertising pages of publishers. Second, there are those constantly employed by one advertiser—the members of a manufacturer's own advertising department. Third, there are advertising agencies.

Even the name "advertising agency" is a misnomer—a survival of an earlier day when an advertising agent was simply a person who obtained advertisements for publishers, a day when nobody bothered much about what an advertisement said. While real-estate men have been turning themselves into realtors and undertakers into morticians, advertising agents have been too busy catching the closing dates of publications to worry about changing their names.

It is true that some of them label themselves "merchandising and advertising counsellors," and occasionally you find a firm of "business engineers" or "research and merchandising specialists," but most advertising agencies content

themselves with the plain word "Advertising."

A generation ago the type of advertising agency organization as it exists to-day was virtually unknown. This was at the period in which American industries were only beginning to enter into an era of production on a large scale. One manufacturer after another found that he could produce much more than the public in his own neighborhood could consume. How could the collar manufacturer in Troy or the furniture manufacturer in Grand Rapids tell the men and women who lived in California or Alabama about their products? By advertising. So the need arose for the type of business man who could do the telling.

The publishers had their service and facilities for sale, but the manufacturer wanted some one to help him convey a message. The publisher realized that his facilities were not complete without some way of preparing the advertiser's story.

With this obvious need on the part of both the manufacturer and the advertiser, it was

only a question of time until there came into existence the type of organization which is known to-day as the advertising agency. So now we have these organizations, some of them small, some of them large, some serving a few clients, some many—all devoted to finding out what conditions are and how best to meet them by interpreting the advertiser's story in a way that will increase his sales and reputation.

These advertising agencies, responsible for the preparation of so great a share of national advertising, are composed of investigators who study the conditions of the market, of executives trained and experienced in drawing conclusions from the material obtained, of artists and writers skilled in interpreting a marketing idea. Working in the closest co-operation with the manufacturer's own advertising experts, it is the work of these agencies to apply their specialized creative abilities to opening up new markets for the advertiser and to creating and maintaining new advertisers for the publisher.

It may be argued that it doesn't matter much

whether the public knows what an advertising agency is or what it does. The manufacturer knows and that's enough. But is it?

Probably 90 per cent of all advertising appearing in national magazines and in newspapers (excepting the advertising of department-stores and specialty shops where the demands of day to day quick changes call for an internal advertising department) is prepared by advertising agencies. New firms are appearing as advertisers every day. Young executives are going into manufacturing companies and are being put to work on tasks which touch advertising and the agency's work at some point.

Every agency numbers among its customers those who represent every shade of understanding of the functions of an advertising agency. Every agency man knows that there are some of his customers who either by instinct or experience seem to know exactly how to utilize all the services of an advertising agency with the least lost motion for everybody. Every agency man knows how much more effectively an agency

operates under those conditions. That is why advertising men have welcomed the Harvard Business School's new method of teaching several hundred future executives each year not just to write copy or make layouts, but to understand what advertising is and how to apply it properly.

For the effectiveness of an agency's work greatly depends upon the congenial, intelligent co-operation of those within an advertiser's organization. The advertising manager and the sales executives of a manufacturer are usually more intimately acquainted with that advertiser's business than his agency. They are on the ground every day. The agency's visits come at intervals. Each one can help the other—particularly when it is realized that there is no conflict of interest, that every one is working for the same thing, and when all time spent together is devoted to a sympathetic exchange of ideas.

One evening recently a certain after-dinner

speaker, occupying a very prominent place in public life, was talking about advertising to a gathering of newspaper publishers. As his speech progressed it became evident that he was congratulating his audience on its ability to write advertisements and to buy unusually fine pictures for the advertising pages of the magazines—and his audience was almost exclusively composed of newspaper publishers and their advertising directors, none of whom ever write an advertisement or buy a picture.

Yet those who listened to him realized that it was not his fault if his ideas were hazy about the way in which advertising is prepared. Probably he never heard of an advertising agency.

Even a learned attorney for the Federal Trade Commission recently showed that his conception of an advertising agency's work was limited to the making of advertisements. He offered in evidence a chart prepared by a certain agency to show the steps through which an advertisement passes on its way from some-

body's brain, through many sets of brains and many pairs of hands, until it finally reaches the presses of a publisher.

"Does that chart show the work of an advertising agency?" he asked.

Of course he was told that it showed only the work of that agency after it actually started to produce an advertisement, but that it did not reflect the vast amount of preliminary study and planning and thinking which preceded the actual producing of such an advertisement.

Agency executives often deplore the general lack of understanding about agency work. Some of them frequently urge the American Association of Advertising Agencies to co-operate with the Association of National Advertisers in a campaign of public education. Perhaps a way will be found to do something of this kind some day. But it has always been felt that there are three real difficulties in the way of such a campaign.

First, advertising agency service is by no means standardized. It has never been the pur-

pose of the American Association of Advertising Agencies to say to its members that they must follow any beaten track in their daily work. The agency business is by the very nature of it an individualistic business, and nothing would be more disheartening to individual creative effort than to be told exactly how it must perform.

The second reason is that advertising agencies vary so tremendously in size. They run all the way from the so-called one-man agency rendering a personal type of intimate service to the larger organization whose members are numbered by the hundreds. Each fills its own place in the general scheme of agency work. The advertiser is able to choose just about any size that best fits his needs. But the person who starts out to describe the way an agency works must remember that he is covering a range of service as wide as the spread between the service of a brain specialist and the Presbyterian Hospital.

The third reason follows naturally. It would

be almost impossible to describe the functions of an advertising agency in any way that would apply to all agencies. Inasmuch as almost all of them have been the result of evolution, starting with a small group of people, it is natural that the kind of work done by the founders of each agency should determine the way in which the rest of the organization develops.

Here we have one agency started by a former solicitor and a copy-writer. Across the street is one in which an artist and a service man have collaborated. Let each of those two agencies grow and prosper for five years and then try to match functions and you will see that a description which applies to one will come very far from fitting the other.

These are just a few recent reasons for the public's unfamiliarity with advertising agency work. But perhaps the most outstanding instance of this kind is the way in which the examination of witnesses by the attorney for the Federal Trade Commission has laid such unusual emphasis on the purely mechanical and

clerical phases of advertising agency work, practically to the exclusion of the creative functions which occupy by far the greater part of an agency's time and reflect its real reason for existence.

Take one instance. The Commission has coined a phrase unfamiliar to advertising men. It speaks of engravings, electrotypes, and mats, and calls them "type parts." Of course, it is apparent that the frequent reference to these "type parts" is for the purpose of seeking to prove that advertising is interstate commerce. But even granting this is an obvious purpose, it is still difficult to see why so much emphasis should be placed upon something so purely incidental to the agency business that it is difficult to find a fair comparison. Perhaps this will serve.

You may remember that when the Federal League was fighting the National and American Leagues in the courts, the question of whether baseball was interstate commerce rested upon the movement of bats, balls, gloves, masks

from State to State. The Supreme Court held that this did not constitute interstate commerce.

Yet many of these bats, balls, masks, and gloves were owned by the clubs themselves. In the case of the agency business these so-called "type parts" are never owned by the agencies. They are bought for their clients when the need arises. The purely incidental nature of such supplies is obvious when it is remembered that they need not even be shipped by the agency. Frequently they are forwarded by the electrotypers or engravers. They may not even exist to enable advertising to be carried on successfully. On more than one occasion complete advertisements have been telegraphed on one evening from New York to appear in Seattle or Los Angeles in the newspapers on the following morning.

It was said a moment ago that a vast amount of work goes on before the actual making of an advertisement. Any agency man has verification of this when he lets his mind go back to the time when a good-sized account came into

his agency a year ago. He remembers the negotiations that occurred before he obtained the account. Perhaps it was necessary for him to have several conferences with this advertiser before he could convince him that this was the agency for him. Several is conservative.

Then he remembers the study that followed. He goes back over the talks with executives, his trip through plants, interviews with branch-managers and wholesale distributors. He thinks of the days and weeks and possibly months that were spent in a field study of the people who sold the product and of the men and women who bought it.

Then he takes himself back to his own organization where the findings of these surveys were gathered together.

He recalls the first time these findings were discussed, the first attempts at interpreting the story, in terms of advertising. He remembers the plans that were written and discarded and revised, the discussions over publications and distribution and methods of marketing.

He remembers the meetings at which he finally submitted his findings to his customer. He thinks back to all of the talks he had with the advertiser and his associates. Then he remembers the way his own organization polished and improved these ideas before he was ready to put his ideas down on paper in the form of concrete copy and layouts. Then more meetings with the customer, probably more revisions of both copy and layout and lists and marketing suggestions. Then ordering the art work, making the exact typographical specifications, scaling the art work down to its proper size.

And finally, after all this time has passed and all of these steps have been successfully taken, one of the clerks in the agency's production department, by ordering an engraving in the name of the customer and as his agent, takes the first step that applies to "type parts."

Fifteen years ago the agency business was a very simple kind of work. For the most part, an agency's activities were limited to the choice

of publications and the preparation of advertisements. But each year has seen a greater and greater extension of the agency's usefulness, until to-day its true function is to provide a service to the manufacturer which will embrace every step in taking his product to market.

In a word, the American advertising agency to-day is in what might be termed the third stage of its development. For many years it was simply a broker of space, sometimes buying at wholesale and selling at retail, sometimes merely selling on a commission basis; that was the first stage. Then came the day when the agency realized that it must be able to create the material intended to fill the space; that was the second stage. To-day it is in the third stage in which it is not content merely to write and illustrate the advertiser's messages to the public. The agency to-day is the advertiser's partner. It offers him the refreshing view-point of the thoughtful, interested outsider, trained in technic and experienced in the fundamentals that underlie all business.

To keep the record clear, it may be well merely to summarize very quickly the six ways in which the agency goes about its business.

First, it is the business of an advertising agency to study the product itself, to compare it with competitive products, to examine its utility, its service to mankind, to study the effectiveness of its presentation to the public in package and design, and, if possible, to make the product's appeal to the public more inviting.

Second, it is the business of an advertising agency to study the market of the product by investigations among the merchants who sell it and among the men and women who ultimately use it.

Third, it is the business of an advertising agency to assemble all the facts gathered in these inquiries and in a study of the manufacturer's own organization and in all available printed information and to formulate an advertising programme which will be inseparably

linked with the manufacturer's selling plan. As a part of the advertising programme the agency will determine—from its own experience, training, and natural ability—what to say about the product, and where, and what to say to the storekeepers who will sell it and to the people who will buy it.

Fourth, it is the agency's business to know best how to prepare these messages in words and pictures and how to combine them through the skilful use of type and the engraver's art.

Fifth, from hundreds of magazines, from thousands of newspapers, the agency must be able to select those which reach the greatest number of possible purchasers at the lowest cost to the advertiser. It must understand the use of other forms of advertising, of street-car and outdoor advertising, of letters and circulars and booklets, of broadcasting and even sky-writing, so that it can most effectively prepare and most economically purchase every kind of advertising material. For it is a part of the agency ser-

vice to give advice about the amount of money to be invested and about the division of the appropriation.

Finally, it is the business of the agency to make contracts with sellers of advertising service and facilities and materials in behalf of the advertiser, to conduct the intricate purchase of these requirements, to see that advertising appears as ordered, and to act as a central disbursing-office in paying the advertiser's bills.

But even though every agency to-day renders a service which falls within this outline, no two agencies work in exactly the same way. Nor do they have the same experiences. Nor do they approach a problem with the same method. Nor do they get the same results.

The most interesting phase of agency work to-day is that it is still young enough to be making its own history. Its arteries have not hardened. An experiment of yesterday is a precedent of to-morrow.

Selling the Institution

X

FORTUNATELY advertising has emerged from one fashion which prevailed a dozen years ago. That was the idea that the best way to advertise a business was to show a picture of the factory, tell how many square feet it contained, enlarge on the personal happiness of the help (those "contented cows" were the farthest north of this style), and, in general, do a thoroughly subjective job. It was called "Institutional Advertising."

To-day, of course, institutional advertising is very different. All honor to the man, then, who probably first put a spike in the old idea.

“Why don’t you advertise your factory?” he was asked.

The answer summed it up. He said:

“It’s not for sale.”

Advertising a product by showing what an impressive factory it came from is convincing only to substantiate an argument of low cost as a result of mass production. If an industry contains many shoe-string companies and if there is one which is well-established, then this sturdy member can inspire confidence by advertising its factory. That is entirely different from just being pompous.

But usually it’s a lot more inviting to tell what the product will do for the person who is reading the advertisement. That’s what interests people most.

The Advertising Agency's Work

XI

SHOW a person through an advertising agency. All he sees is a lot of people picking up pieces of paper and putting them down or carrying them from one part of the office to another. The work is going on behind doors that are closed, or out in some retailer's store or in the office of a client. It is the exact opposite from that type of factory where you can stand in one small room and watch the raw materials fall into a machine at one end and come out at the other end ready to ship.

Walk into a laboratory and look at a row of test-tubes. There is nothing on the surface to show that a discovery which may rock the sci-

entific world is on the eve of developing. Go into a newspaper office even a few minutes before an edition goes to press and there is nothing to tell you what to-morrow's front page will look like.

You remember the story of the politician who had just bought a newspaper and who was inspecting his property.

"Who is that fellow over there?" he asked.

"That's the exchange editor," was the answer.

"Well, fire him," said the owner; "I haven't seen him do a thing but read the papers."

It has been said that advertising agencies deal in white space. It would be as accurate to say that they deal in wood pulp. Wood pulp is useless to the advertiser until it has been fabricated into newsprint. Newsprint or white space is useless to the advertiser until it has been fabricated into advertisements. Advertising does not come into existence until thought and experience and time and energy have been applied to it by creative service. Agency work is

not a commodity; it is a creative service. That creative service is what the advertising agency sells. It is intangible, if you like, as imponderable as the knowledge which enables a doctor to diagnose and prescribe, a lawyer to give an opinion or to try a case, an artist to paint a picture, or a scientist to invent a new formula.

What an advertising agency buys from a publisher for his client is not white space but rather the publisher's service and facilities to print a certain advertisement.

You can see an agency man calling on a manufacturer and telling him the market possibilities of his product, but you can't see the precise point at which the logic of his arguments convinces his prospect that he should advertise.

You can see a man or woman going from door to door, from store to store, asking questions about the use of a product or competitive products, but you cannot see the experience and skill that decided what questions to ask nor the judgment that takes the answers and interprets them into advertising.

You can see pages of typewritten copy and designs for artistic pages. But you cannot see the creative ability that led to proportioning the picture to the text and to choosing one artist against another or one certain group of words when the whole dictionary was there to choose from.

You can see a neatly typewritten list of newspapers or magazines, but you cannot see the interviews with solicitors and the files of information that led to the selection of one paper as against another or one magazine as against another.

At last you can see a series of finished advertisements. But you cannot see that these same advertisements are appearing in perhaps a hundred other cities or in a dozen other magazines. Nor can you see the letters and circulars and booklets and broadsides carefully prepared, each one dropped into its proper place, to make every ounce of every dollar work. Nor can you see the advertising of dealers inspired and created by the appearance of a national adver-

tiser's copy in a newspaper or a magazine. Nor can you see the manufacturer's salesman going from store to store telling the story of the advertising, arranging displays in windows or on counters, putting the advertising where it will be seen and having the product where it can be bought.

When Sinclair Lewis wrote *Arrowsmith* you may remember that he gave great credit to Dr. Paul DeKruif for the extraordinary background of medical research. Dr. DeKruif himself wrote a book which became a best seller. It was called *Microbe Hunters*. In it at one point he says:

"Pasteur's experiments were brilliant, but they had proved nothing about the how and why of human sickness. Pasteur was a trail-blazer, a forerunner, crying possible future great victories over disease, shouting about magnificent stampings out of epidemics; but meanwhile the moujiks of desolate towns in Russia were still warding off scourges by hitching four widows to a plough and with them drawing a

furrow round their villages in the dead of night—and their doctors had no sounder protection to offer them.

“That is only fifty years ago,” continues Dr. DeKruif, and he adds, “I must repeat that the most eminent doctors had not one bit better explanation for the causes of epidemics than the ignorant Russian villagers who hitched the town widows to their ploughs.”

Remember that was only fifty years ago, and yet the discoveries of Pasteur have become so much a part of our daily life that we accept them without question.

The business of creating advertising as it exists to-day in the service of the modern advertising agency spreads over one generation at most. Changes that have occurred in the last ten years have been overwhelming. The improvement of advertising technic has enabled manufacturers to achieve economy of mass production for the public's welfare and their own prosperity. Yet in the creating of advertising we are working with the most in-

tangible factors of human life. We are dealing with the most volatile factor in modern civilization, human nature.

You cannot make a person read an advertisement and then put him under the microscope to see how he reacts. You cannot even be there when he reads the newspaper or magazine in which appears the message that you have prepared for him. Microbes may be small, but they don't mind being put under the microscope lens for examination, and they don't get self-conscious when you question them. Human beings are another story. Yet even in dealing with so complex a being as the modern American man or woman, advertising agency service is making it possible for a great and constantly growing number of manufacturers to establish their products in the preferences, even in the affections, of men and women.

And the reason that this has come about is that the scope of advertising agency service represents something which, like the iceberg, has more than seven-eighths of its bulk out of

sight. Why, compared to advertising agency service to-day the iceberg is as much on the surface as a water-lily!

In that interesting book called *Why We Behave Like Human Beings*, by Professor George Dorsey, occur these paragraphs:

“An eel travels down the Rhine to the sea, and keeps right on until she reaches the Azores; lays her eggs; dies. Her progeny return to the Rhine. Salmon are as ‘uncanny’; from the sea they enter fresh-water rivers and ascend far inland; deposit their eggs; die. They are in such hurry to make this journey to the grave that they do not stop on the way to eat. Young salmon return to the briny deep to grow up, and find their way back up the very same river to pay their debt to their kind and to their nature.

“During evolution, life has encountered endless situations and has learned—sometimes only indifferently well—to meet these situations in endless ways. Some of these ways are still miles beyond us—as Huxley remarked of

his crayfish after studying it all his life. We see the responses—and too often interpret them in terms of our own likes and dislikes, pains and pleasures, work and play.

“We think we know why we travel a thousand miles to die in the old home, and how we find it. But why should a poor fish of a salmon go hungry for weeks, travel a thousand miles, breast endless rapids and climb waterfalls, just to polish off life in the old home? It seems stupid! It is! It has nearly been the death of salmon. Think of all the salmon ever canned—all because they insist on going home to die!

“The average mortal has only one habit. The one stimulus which rouses him from sleep carries him through the day and back to bed and to sleep. All days look alike to him. Saturday night is also conditioned into the chain; no fresh stimulus needed for the bath! His body’s clock is likewise set for Sunday. That day, too, goes by according to schedule, and when done is itself the stimulus to resume a new week. One habit after another, like a

chain, functioning as one. Works like a clock wound up for life. Makes a perfect clerk, 'hand,' or maid."

And these are the people whose habits we must change! If Huxley found the crayfish miles beyond him after a lifetime of study, is it any wonder that human beings don't always respond exactly as we expect?

The other day a young lawyer walked into an advertising agency. He wanted to go into the advertising business, and some one asked him why.

"I'll tell you," he said. "I went to law school because my father was a lawyer. I'm with one of the best firms in New York. But I find that the law isn't at the heart of business as it was when my father practised law twenty years ago. At that time, companies were being put together for mass production. A corporation lawyer was working on the most vital part of business. But to-day production is solved. Distribution is the biggest problem. And the

advertising agency is at the heart of it. That's why I want to join an advertising agency."

Perhaps the young lawyer put his finger on the reason that those who are in the thick of it know that to-day it is the hardest, most interesting, most exasperating, satisfying, worthwhile and exciting business that ever engaged the time and talents of a group of people. It's going to grow better, of course, as the years go by. Advertising men are learning new ways of making advertising pay every month. But just as it stands, in its usefulness and economies to the advertiser and the publisher, it's the business in which every agency man takes the greatest kind of enjoyment, satisfaction, and pride. He wouldn't change jobs with anybody on earth.

These Self-Starting Rumors

XII

THERE seems to be something about the advertising business which lends itself to the wide and care-free circulation of rumors. Frequently—usually, in fact—the basis of these rumors may be nothing more than a haphazard remark. But the pebble is cast and the ripples spread.

An agency sends out a new type of copy for one of its clients.

“That’s mighty different copy that So-and-So is putting out in its new campaign for the A B C Company, isn’t it?” says some one.

“Yes,” is the reply. “You might almost think that another agency had taken over the account.”

The idea that one agency may hit a radical change of pace is something which calls for a leap in imagination too great for many minds to take. If they have heard a famous singer sing a certain song, they always want him to sing that same song. If a popular actress has played adventuresses, they want her to keep right on being adventurous. They like to have things stay put.

So these two men go their ways and the next time it's like this:

"Interesting-looking stuff, that new advertising of the A B C Company, isn't it?"

"So-and-So still handling it?"

"I suppose so. Still, you never can tell. It's certainly different."

It never seems to occur to any one that a reputation is being tossed around with as little thought for the reputation as a pancake flipper in Childs' window has for the pancake he flips.

And then it's only a matter of two or three conversations later when you will hear:

"Too bad about So-and-So's losing the A B C account."

"Have they lost it?"

"Haven't you seen the new campaign?"

After that, they're off!

In and out of agencies go representatives who need something for their small talk before they settle down to tell their own stories. Over luncheon-tables men are exchanging the gossip of the business. Everybody naturally likes to appear well-informed.

A story of an advertiser changing agencies is much more exciting than a story of a satisfied advertiser. It's the divorces that get the newspaper head-lines. There is no news in domestic happiness.

Presently the tipsters begin calling up their favorite agencies. Then the A B C Company is besieged. Telegrams come in droves. Solicitors for other agencies arrive. The telephone is busy. The directory people ask for verification. *Printers' Ink* and *Advertising & Selling* are the only ones who take the trouble to call up

the A B C Company and the So-and-So Agency to get the facts. Nobody else asks the agency. But everybody tells it the news.

After a few weeks some one may say:

“I thought you said the A B C Company had taken its account away from the So-and-So Agency?”

However, nobody pays any attention to that. Every one is too busy saying:

“But did you hear that the X Y Z Company is leaving Such-and-Such?”

How Agencies Help to Build Businesses

XIII

PERHAPS the best way to describe the activities of the present-day advertising agency is to give some concrete examples of what it does before it prepares advertisements and while it is preparing them.

The head chemist of a certain manufacturer discovered a new varnish. His company thought that it would be better than any competitive product for outdoor use and so it was advertised in three yachting magazines. Just at that time the company engaged one of the best agencies in the United States. It was apparent to the agency, after the situation was studied, that the market possibilities had not been ap-

preciated and that this new product was really a household varnish, with qualities which would outdistance competition. At that time the company sold only to large consumers such as railroads, carriage-builders, and industrial concerns. At the suggestion of the agency, a new specialty sales manager was engaged, four new salesmen were put to work, and in the first year 2,500 dealers were obtained. The first appropriation in general advertising was \$50,000. To-day this company is investing \$1,000,000 a year in advertising this product, and it is the largest selling varnish in the world.

Several years ago an agency noticed that tins with perforated tops were becoming very popular. One of its clients made a product sold only in cake form. The agency recommended that the product be made in powder form and packed in sifter cans, as well as cakes. The management demurred at the additional cost. The agency acknowledged the extra cost, but pointed out that the sifter can was far more conve-

nient for the housewife, much more attractive, and reminded this manufacturer that some one else would be apt to see the possibilities of such a package if he didn't.

"It took us over two years to sell this idea to the company," says this advertising man, "but finally we convinced them that success in business meant giving the people what they want and on that basis they decided to go ahead."

No pressure was put on the new package. The product was advertised in two forms—powder and cake. The powder was an immediate success, and eight years after it was put on the market its sales were greater than the sales of the cake, which, by the way, showed continuous sales increases during all that period. In other words, the introduction of the new package, suggested and urged by the agency, has more than doubled the total business of the company.

Remarkable progress has been made in this basic work of improving packages. Often the new package, designed to meet conditions of to-

day, has nothing in common with the old package except the name. Often the new and the old packages are on the dealer's shelves side by side in the year in which the radical change is being made. And yet, when properly handled, there is no falling off in sales. One agency, with perhaps more experience in this matter than any other in the United States, reports that in the year in which the new package takes the place of the old sales increases are obtained; and, more than that, competition is cut off from seizing the opportunity to wedge into the market with a superior package.

Fifteen years ago another agency started work on a product on which the sales had been falling off alarmingly. Examination proved that the product was absolutely sound, that its price, though high, was no higher than competitive prices for inferior quality, and that the fault lay in the manner in which the product had been presented to the public. It simply did not sell at its price. By a complete change in the manner of presentation the losses were stemmed

and continual increases were obtained. The advertising appropriation on this article has always been on a strict percentage basis. To-day the appropriation is seven times as great as the entire sales of the product were fifteen years ago.

The basic principle illustrated by this instance is as old as Advertising itself. It goes right back to the agency function of preparing copy and layouts. But the difference between failure and success was that the agency was able to contribute a manner of presentation which was so interesting that the public suddenly discovered a product which it had ignored for years.

Still another basic bit of service was rendered by the agency of a manufacturer who was trying to fit his product to the supposedly varying needs of different sections in the United States. As a result of his policy he did not have national distribution on any of his products. The first study here was to see whether one form of his product could not be sold nationally. In-

dications were that it could be sold everywhere. By combining forceful advertising and aggressive sales work the single brand is now enjoying national sale in continually increasing volume. The manufacturer is profiting not only from the greater safety now inherent in his business but also from all the economies of manufacture and selling resulting from standardizing his product.

Equally fundamental was another agency's contribution to the success of an advertiser who had grown to be the leader in his line but who did not own his business because his name appeared on none of his products. They were branded with the individual private marks of sixty-eight distributors. He had never advertised nor had he ever contemplated advertising until, in a period of depression, he was approached by an advertising agency. It took nearly a year for the agency to start a programme of creating a new brand bearing the manufacturer's name. This was advertised.

His distributors fought it, even though their

own brands were being continued. But at the end of three years the manufacturer's name was combined with the name of nearly every distributor, and these hyphenated products still competed with the manufacturer's own brand. Two years later all the private brands were eliminated without losing a single distributor. To-day the right to distribute that product—which is not complete in itself but must be re-fabricated for public consumption—has become practically a franchise in the industry. It is competed for. Prices, which used to be cut at every turn, are now standardized and the product has gone through depressions of business without wavering. The sales were large before the change was made. To-day they have more than doubled. The advertiser gives credit for this situation to the agency.

Here is a story in vivid contrast to those which have been quoted—a story of a business failure, yet there could scarcely be a better illustration of the advertising agency's true function.

A man walked into a certain agency one day and announced that he had been sent by his company to offer the agency a \$100,000 appropriation. The Board of Directors had passed it and the company wanted to get started right away. The agency replied that it would have to insist upon approaching the problem in its usual way by a study to determine whether an advertising programme would be profitable. The emissary returned to his Board, greatly displeased, complained that the agency had refused to take the business, and announced that he would seek another agency. But he made the mistake of explaining why the agency had refused to go ahead. The Board instructed him to go back and retain the agency on its own terms. The agency in its study discovered a most lamentable situation, not apparent on the surface. The company had not realized, for example, that it was insufficiently financed. The final report pointed out all the weaknesses, financial and otherwise, recommended certain retrenchments which were very distasteful to

the Board, suggested supplying additional capital, and advised *against* advertising. The recommendation against advertising was accepted. Otherwise the company went its own sweet way.

Inside of a year the receiver stepped in. In reviewing the creditors' accounts he came upon the agency's agreement for a \$12,000 retaining fee. He approved the account at once, saying that the agency had saved the business from making a large unwise expenditure, and adding that if the agency's advice had been followed he never would have had his job.

Many instances might be quoted in which the agency refused to advise a penny's worth of advertising until the manufacturer had set his house in order. In reporting the incident just cited, and another equally interesting, this agent remarked:

"These are not examples of advertising agency service leading to great success, but in my judgment they are nevertheless examples of real advertising agency service, of which,

unfortunately, our business has many more than the two I have cited. I say 'unfortunately' because we don't like to spend our time designing coffins and shrouds."

Hundreds of other instances might be given to reflect the spirit that is pervading the work of the agencies of the United States.

Agencies have persuaded their clients to change from indirect selling to direct selling, to increase their sales organizations, to re-route salesmen—in each case lowering selling costs and getting more business. Agencies have convinced presidents of companies that Advertising is not a plaything but something which deserves an important part of their thought. Agencies have shown advertisers that the public cannot be interested in a long, involved, technical story and—as in one case where sixteen talking-points were boiled down to one strong appeal—have carried a fundamental idea about a product into millions of minds.

Advertising has been applied in countless new directions through the initiative of the

agency. To-day fire insurance companies are advertising to reduce the number of fires and life insurance companies are advertising to make people live longer. Advertising is reaching literally from the cradle to the grave, for the same magazine carries the messages of the man who makes nursing-bottles and the man who makes mausoleums. Advertising makes people appreciate the service of their telephones even when accidents render the service unappreciable and teaches them not to swear at the operator or at their friends. Advertising has been employed to speed legislation, to warn against counterfeiters of labels on bootleg bottles, to recover stolen goods, to fight popular fads, to meet whispering campaigns of slander, to place men on farms, to develop a new business street, to check a crime wave, to elect a mayor and a congresswoman, to protect expiring patent rights, to keep people out of lawless taxicabs, to teach thrift and cleanliness and godliness.

Agencies have caused competing manufac-

turers to sit together around one table and to devise ways of making a common appeal to the public in selling dried and canned fruits, raisins, prunes, nuts, lumber, cement, paint, brick, furniture, leather, coffee, and so on.

The advertising agency is not the only creative force behind the tremendous development in the last two or three decades. But in this period of America's greatest industrial progress the advertising agency has come into existence. And it deserves its part of the credit for the increase of advertising volume, and the economies which it represents in production and distribution.

Some Subjects Decidedly Moot



XIV

SOMETIME when you are in a group of people who earn their bread and butter from advertising, if the conversation should lag, ask this question:

“Is an advertising agency the agent of the publisher or of the advertiser?”

There is a question which has probably started more arguments than any other, unless you include the one which begins:

“Isn’t it true that agencies would rather use magazines than newspapers because they make more money out of magazine advertising?”

The easiest way to approach the first question—the one about whether the agency is the agent of the advertiser or of the publisher—is to start with the self-evident fact that the

advertising agency is in business for itself. It is in the business of providing a type of service which happens to be useful to both the advertiser and the publisher. It is in the business of creating advertising. And that business of creating advertising falls naturally into two distinct kinds of effort—first, the creating of new advertisers; and second, the creating of advertising plans and advertisements for these new advertisers and for others already existing.

There is no conflict in this doubly useful service. The real-estate agent arranges a transaction which serves both the buyer and the seller, though his commission is paid by only one. The modern insurance agent provides a service to the policyholder as well as to the company, though his income is derived from the company. The advertising agency is appointed by the advertiser to promote his business and at the same time makes the publisher's product merchantable and maintains the market for it. To both he owes the responsibility of making the advertising pay.

Here is a type of service which owes one distinct responsibility to the publisher and another distinct responsibility to the advertiser. Perhaps this responsibility to the publisher can best be described by dividing it into three phases:

The first, is creating new advertisers. Concrete facts are always more interesting than generalities. So, to describe this function in definite terms, figures were recently obtained from forty-eight advertising agencies. They were agencies of all sizes—some large, some very small.

The first question was: "How many of the accounts now handled by your agency were not advertisers before your agency began work with them?" From these forty-eight agencies the answer was 631 accounts. This is an average of more than thirteen accounts per agency. The next time any one tells you that the agencies only take business from one another, quote those figures. Forty-eight agencies, large and small, have created 631 accounts.

The second question was: "How many of these have become newspaper advertisers?" The answer was 471.

The third question was: "What is the combined total amount now invested annually by these advertisers in newspaper advertising?" From forty-three agencies the total report was \$18,700,276.

These figures are not offered as conclusive. They are taken at random from forty-eight agencies of various types and sizes. But they do represent rather impressive evidence that the agency's function of creating new advertisers has not been and is not being slighted.

One agency volunteered an additional answer when it said that its two clients that had become newspaper advertisers, spending annually \$235,000, had created through local dealers \$225,000 worth of additional advertising in newspapers. Another added: "Eight accounts now on our books are spending less than \$10,000 each annually—new within the last

year—never before advertising in either magazines or newspapers.” Their future possibilities, of course, are not included. Nor are there included in these figures the increased expenditures of these accounts since they appointed these agencies.

The second phase of the agency’s responsibilities to the publisher is to work with him to plan the advertiser’s programme on a solid basis of fact. One reason the agency business is a hard business is that it offers so many opportunities to confuse facts with opinions. The agency man says to a customer:

“There ought to be a good market for your product in Texas.”

The customer can answer promptly: “Perhaps, but I don’t think there is.”

But if the agency man says: “Have you noticed that your sales in Texas are much better than in any other State? We sent some people out there to talk to a thousand Texas women, and we found that the climate makes your product more welcome than any other in that ter-

ritory. Your large sales there are not an accident. Let's push them."

The advertiser listens to reason when he isn't interested in mere opinions. In fact, one advertiser who had exactly this type of investigation made in Texas, is now acting on the figures which the inquiry produced.

Probably the greatest single forward step in bringing facts before advertisers came when the Audit Bureau of Circulations was organized to take the place of hit-or-miss guesses about circulation.

Individual publishers have sensed the need of differentiating between one type of circulation and another, and have conducted serious surveys to enable the buyer of space to buy intelligently. But the first attempt to appraise the *quality* of circulation on a broad scale is the survey recently completed by the American Association of Advertising Agencies under the direction of Dr. Daniel Starch, formerly of Harvard.

Great credit is due the magazine publishers

who co-operated with the association in this earnest effort to find out just who actually does read these magazines.

But it is not only in getting the figures about the quantity and quality of circulation that publishers and agencies co-operate.

When an agency starts work on a new account, it is feasible and desirable for the agency to be able to turn to the publishers for sound, unprejudiced information on the industry to which that advertiser belongs.

A year or so ago, an agency started work on a new account in a very new industry. It soon developed that there were mighty few, if any, basic facts known about that industry anywhere. Fragmentary surveys had been made here and there, mostly by newspaper publishers, a few by magazines, and one or two in the farm field. But it was necessary for the advertiser to send his agency over the greater part of the United States to get a representative picture of the situation in which this industry found itself at that time.

The publisher has an interest in all the advertisers in any given industry. If he can supply, through any central bureau, a fund of information gathered from one local centre after another, the agency will be able to take these basic facts and devote its energies to a far deeper and more intensive study of its client's individual situation within the industry.

In the creating of advertising plans the advertiser to-day rightfully expects that his agency will be able to support every recommendation with facts instead of matters of opinion. It is the agency's job not to persuade the advertiser to spend a large amount of money on the wish and the hope that somehow it may, in some vague way, come back to him, but to study the markets available for its client's products, and if there exist market possibilities which are inviting, to plan such advertising as will best interpret the advertiser's sales story in terms of advertising.

Doesn't it follow, by the same token, that time and energy and effort are only being

wasted by fruitless discussions between publishers and agencies on mere matters of opinion; and that the publisher who will enjoy a growing prosperity is the one who proves to the agency the facts which in themselves prove obviously that the market possibility exists and that his paper is the best avenue of approach to that market?

Perhaps it would be difficult to find a better example of the futile confusion that results merely from placing one opinion against another, than the question whether the agency prefers using magazines to newspapers.

Here is a topic that is almost sure to come up in every informal gathering of newspaper men and agency men.

The exciting part is to make bets with yourself as to whether it will come up while the clams are being served or will be deferred until the chocolate eclairs have disappeared and perfectos have been lighted. The only variation is one of time. The subject is a certainty.

Let's take this subject firmly in both hands

and see if there aren't at least four concrete reasons for knocking this old fallacy into a cocked hat.

In the first place, in all discussions of this kind the examples cited are extreme examples. The man who is seeking to build up this argument invariably compares a dozen advertisements in a hundred newspapers with one color page in a national magazine. It is pointed out that the cost is about the same in each case. Have you ever heard of an agency's recommending just one full page in color in one national magazine, once? If you did, the chances are that you soon ceased to hear about that agency.

Putting it another way, the typical case most often cited is one which by the very nature of things does not exist.

To-day the tendency, and this would be the second point, is to specialize the appeal to fit the medium. Perhaps that can best be illustrated by citing a campaign which is now running and in which advertisements are appearing

in the newspapers, on bill-boards, in women's magazines, in national weeklies, in farm papers, in general magazines, in class periodicals, in magazines for boys, in business papers, and in humorous publications. That makes nine different campaigns running simultaneously. Almost without exception, however, in each one a different copy appeal is used. The treatment is adapted to the editorial character of the publication.

One story is told to the boys, another to their mothers and sisters, the humorous publications have copy to suit their editorial content, and so on.

The same argument that will sell this product to the readers of a style magazine would not be so effective in the farm publications. Yet in all the newspapers used in an extensive list of cities, it has been found that there is no need for more than one series to suit conditions.

In other words, the same amount of care and attention is expended on a piece of copy designed for a business publication that is de-

voted to one of the series of newspaper advertisements appearing in upward of fifty cities. Nine different copy appeals and designs are produced in this campaign of which only one is needed for a newspaper campaign.

The third point is that the cost of agency departments affected by whether a series of advertisements runs in half a dozen magazines or half a hundred newspapers, is so small that it is actually negligible.

To arrive at actual figures rather than generalities on this point as well, some figures have been prepared which reflect the actual facts in a certain agency of medium size. The burden of whether an advertising campaign runs in magazines or newspapers falls upon certain departments within that agency. These are the contract department, which deals with the publishers' representatives and which prepares estimates; the forwarding department, which makes out the insertion orders for publishers; the checking department, which keeps on the lookout for the appearance of advertisements

and reminds some publishers that payment is waiting for them as soon as they send in their proof of publication; and the accounting department, which must keep the books and do the billing. Those who plan and analyze a given market and interpret the facts of a selling programme in terms of advertising are not affected. The creative work of arriving at an advertising platform is the hard job of an agency.

It is not difficult to learn to write out insertion orders nor is highly paid labor essential in wrapping up and shipping electrotypes and mats. Once the advertisement has been created, approved by the advertiser and okayed for production, the man who did the creative work can cease to worry.

It does not matter to him whether the advertising platform which has been worked out calls for a half dozen advertisements or a dozen. Any person who builds advertisements will tell you that once he is on the right track the extension of his ideas to a few additional

pieces of copy and layouts is comparatively easy. The remainder of the work is mighty little trouble compared to getting the original idea. It does not matter to him whether the advertisement appears in one or one thousand places, any more than it worries a novelist whether his latest book is printed in an edition of 1,000 or 100,000. It probably didn't take any more time to write the play which flopped on Broadway last week after a run of one consecutive night than it did to write "Abie's Irish Rose."

What then is the expense to an agency of these departments which carry the burden when the advertisement is run in newspapers instead of magazines? The total expense of these departments in one agency is considerably less than five per cent of the agency's gross income. Yet the total expense is not involved. Only the *additional* expense caused by the added mechanical and clerical details is affected. So the question of where an advertisement appears or in how many places is of still less consequence.

SOME SUBJECTS DECIDEDLY MOOT

In a word, it is safe to say that on a million dollars' worth of business the difference in the agency's profit for additional labor required in those departments if an advertising account runs in newspapers instead of magazines is a matter of a very few hundred dollars.

You remember the story of the Scotchman who was found whipping his son.

"What has he done?" the father was asked. And the Scotchman replied: "He bought an all-day sucker at four o'clock in the afternoon."

An agency which would be so penurious of its time and effort that it would jeopardize its standing with its client for the sake of this indicated difference in profit would be just about as logical.

And now as to the fourth point. Fortunately it converges with the last of the phases of an agency's responsibility to a publisher. Let it be put in this way: An agency's preferences with regard to the amount of effort which can be expended are automatically controlled. They are controlled by the agency's responsibilities

to both the advertiser and the publisher to make that advertising work—to make it pay.

Even if it were granted that the agency is constitutionally lazy, and even if it were so without a sense of obligation as to rate at nothing the trust which its client has placed in it, there would still be the compelling motive of self-interest which makes it necessary for advertising to be successful so that a client's business may grow.

Advertisers do not put their accounts in the hands of agencies on purely charitable motives. They do not leave their accounts in the hands of agencies in the face of discouraging results. Advertisers expect their advertising appropriations to produce results. The only way that an agency can maintain a reputation for good work is to do good work.

Many people still think of the agency as it existed thirty, twenty, even ten years ago. Many people, too, think of an agency as doing only one kind of creative work—creating advertisements. There are those who think that an

agency commission is earned when copy has been written and pictures bought. To them it seems that an advertiser who prepares his own advertisements has done all that you expect of an agency. He sees nothing unreasonable in the request that the full commission be allowed him for this work. One man who had organized an internal advertising department for this purpose recently testified that it cost him as much as 25 per cent of his total appropriation in one year. With the agency commission at 15 per cent, designed also to cover other types of creative effort and still show a decent margin of profit, it is not hard to understand why this advertiser felt that having spent 25 per cent he had earned at least fifteen.

But fortunately the publishers of the country had studied this question long before this advertiser embarked upon his interesting if costly experiment, long before agencies developed to their present creative point, long before there was such an organization as the American Association of Advertising Agencies.

Publishers have frequently affirmed their position on that point. They have stated in unmistakable terms just why they know that the agency system is in their interests. They have repeatedly confirmed the position that they have occupied for a generation.

In that generation they have seen hundreds of advertisers developed. They have seen national advertising grow into an almost unbelievable volume. They have found in many instances that an examination of their costs proves that national advertising sent by agencies is the most profitable classification on their books. They have immense sums invested in their properties. They are rendering a public service which entitles them to long life and prosperity.

Something Sound or Merely Different

XV

THE darkey with his minstrel collar and his pearl-gray derby strummed his banjo under the flickering gasoline-torch. The Saturday night crowd gathered around the tail of the cart. And when enough people were packed in close, the long-haired professor in the frock coat explained what a boon to humanity's ills he held in the bottle in his hand at "only twenty-five cents, the quarter part of a dollar."

The darkey collected the crowd. The professor sold it. That's the important point to remember.

The other day a man of varied activities

went to see the head of an advertising agency. He explained that he was "handling" a certain writer, a man who has a considerable following among readers of newspaper features and who has contributed to many of the revues on Broadway.

"I want to sell him for copy writing," said this promoter. "If some of these other big humorists can write advertising, I don't see why my man can't."

"Neither do I," was the answer.

"Then you can use him?"

"No," said the agency man.

"Why not?"

The agency man described the technic of the travelling medicine show.

"The darkey collected the crowd," said he. "But the professor sold it. Wise-cracks get a reading, of course. The crowd is ready, expectant. But then the big-name writer stops. There's no persuasion. It's like an over-clever slogan. People remember the slogan and can't tell you the name of the product it advertises."

In the continual scramble for something new in advertising, rather than something sound and effective, professional writers of fiction and humor have been enlisted occasionally to write advertisements. Some of their output has been amusing, some of it has created temporary comment, but mighty little of it has done constructive building.

There was no persuasion, no knowledge of the product. More important still, it failed in that most important job of an advertisement: to centre all the attention on the merchandise and none on the technic of presenting it. The best advertising calls no attention to itself.

Too often trick ideas like these are the advertising man's answer to the pressure from the advertiser to "give us something different." Advertising planned to sell the man paying the bill will rarely sell the public which buys the goods.

Incidents of Agency Service



XVI

FOR a certain smart shoe-store an advertisement was prepared in which appeared bona fide testimonials of the city's most exclusive dressmakers emphasizing the importance of footwear in the complete costume. The illustration above each statement showed a gown from the modiste's collection with the proper shoe to accompany it. There were three results. The advertisement sold shoes and created prestige for the shoe-store. It created good-will among the modistes, who were in a position to send their patrons where they would select a shoe for a certain gown. This good-will was cemented by the fact that the

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advertisement sold some of the actual gowns shown at no cost to the dressmakers.

.

In a national magazine advertisement featuring an architect's office, it was necessary to show an office which would satisfy every architect in the country. To get this true picture, a letter was sent to all the architectural publications asking for a description and illustration of the average architect's office. Not satisfied entirely with that, the agency visited several architects. With this information an advertisement was produced that was received with favorable comment from men who would have been critical if the illustration had not been faithful in its details.

.

One of the agency's first steps, after its appointment to handle the advertising of a certain proprietary article, was to retain a prominent physician on a consulting basis. The advice and suggestions of this physician were obtained

at every step of the agency's studies and planning.

This agency believes in retaining specialists in other phases of its work. For example, it has on its staff a dietitian for consulting work on each of its food accounts and for developing and testing all its food recipes.

As a member of its regular staff it has an experienced graduate chemist, a man who was formerly managing editor of the leading magazine in the field of chemistry. His work on products in which a professional knowledge of chemistry is important has been invaluable both to the agency and to its clients.

.

When the assistant to the Advertising Manager of one of an agency's clients was obliged to resign immediately because his doctor ordered him to take a year's rest, the agency was asked to lend a man to handle the mass of work which was daily pouring over his desk.

This man stepped in on a few hours' notice

—took the job, desk, and secretary of the executive and carried on his work.

.

A certain month was a crucial period in the history of a manufacturer. A new treasurer had been in office for one year. The annual meeting was approaching.

The agency was asked to prepare and print the annual Treasurer's Statement, which had always been a hastily prepared four-page folder without typographical excellence.

The result was a greater interest on the part of the stockholders and many words of praise for the enterprise and progressiveness of the new officials.

.

In the early days of an agency's connection with an advertiser it was asked to go to the mills and look at a site which had been selected for an electric sign.

The agency went very thoroughly into the

subject—got figures on automobile traffic, train traffic, and dug deep into every other feature. The result was the recommendation for a sign costing \$4,000 less than one that had been recommended, yet accomplishing the same result in a better manner.

When this advertiser erected a new plant the same procedure was repeated. A sign costing \$2,500 was erected, with a saving of \$1,500.

.

A retailer who followed the common practice of basing his advertising budget on sales of the previous year was not satisfied with his growth.

His agency worked out a detailed budget which could be balanced against a forecast of business for each month of the *current* year, regarding advertising as a normal cost of doing current business.

The best proof that this is sound is the fact that for sixteen consecutive months the sales have shown a gain against the same month in

the year previous, a condition which is not matched by any big retailer in the same city.

The advertising is "turned over" twelve times a year—as if it were merchandise.

.

A manufacturer of men's wear of national reputation could afford to spend very little on his national advertising.

His agency worked out a system of furnishing the local dealer with advertising material which he could use in his local newspaper and developed it to a point where to-day the manufacturer is spending \$1 as against approximately \$2.35 spent by the local dealer to advertise this branded product.

This was accomplished by a thorough study of what the local retailer wanted. He is to-day using advertising furnished by the manufacturer and prepared by the agency.

Furthermore, this system for four successive seasons has doubled (each season) the retail advertising lineage bought by the retailers

in their own papers entirely at their own expense.

.

One Saturday morning, an agency received a client's request to make a hurried and confidential survey in a town of 35,000 population, located about ninety miles from its office. Findings were wanted before a coming meeting of the directors. Haste was necessary.

By Monday morning a sixteen-question questionnaire was ready—multigraphed by noon. At 3 P. M. an advance man mapped out territories. At 6 P. M. the reporters met him for instructions.

Tuesday morning, six men were off early in the worst storm of the winter. In and out of stores—good neighborhoods and bad. By 4 P. M. every grocery and delicatessen store (and a few restaurants for good measure) that could be found had been surveyed—153 of them. By 7 P. M. all the facts were in New York.

The next day the questionnaires were analyzed and results tabulated. Results justified the

effort. Only ninety-six hours elapsed from the time the survey request was received until the report was submitted to the client.

The results of the investigation saved the customer a proposed investment of over \$200,000 in equipment necessary to market a new product supposed to have been successfully put out by a competitor in the city of 35,000. It wasn't.

.

For a certain grocery product the agency decided on a new appeal bringing out the various uses of this food. When this new copy first appeared, there was an increase of approximately 500 per cent in the monthly requests for recipe books, although the recipe book had been offered free in previous copy, and a charge was made in the new advertisements.

During the whole previous year the advertiser received through the mails 11,792 requests. During the first two months and four days of the next year the advertiser received 17,222, even though the invitation to send for

the recipe book was made only in one line at the close of the advertisement.

.

A certain company wanted additional distribution without the expense of hiring salesmen. The agency accomplished it by putting up to the newspaper in each city an advertising campaign conditional upon definite co-operation. This included getting from the newspapers a list of dealers, the distribution of a sample package of the product to each dealer and obtaining a receipt; a letter from the newspaper to each dealer explaining the plan, and letters direct from the advertiser to the dealers.

Based on the theory that there must be stocks in each store before advertising starts, the advertising, coupled with this co-operative plan with the newspaper, proved highly successful.

.

The windows of eleven branches of a certain bank had never been considered in the light of helping to get new customers for the bank.

The agency suggested using these windows to sell various phases of the bank's service. The officers were glad to have it undertaken.

It is now a part of the agency's work to design, install, and check the effectiveness of window-displays in these branches. A small motion-picture projector is used in this work. The preparation of scenarios and supervision of the making of the films is now a regular part of the agency's service.

.

A well-known firm had never been able to devise a way to get women to discuss one of its products frankly.

In ten days its agency conducted a special survey among 1,500 women by organizing crews of trained nurses who made personal calls from door to door and accomplished what had been thought impossible.

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Sometimes unusual methods are needed to obtain information from salesmen in the field.

For a manufacturer of office equipment it was decided to feature the rapidity with which papers could be filed and found.

"Ten-second" filing stories were needed. To obtain them, local salesmen and agents were asked for their own experiences. A wealth of material was obtained in this way, and the indirect result was far more valuable; the copy idea was thoroughly sold to the salesmen themselves.

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In a trip through the South with a representative of a client, an agency man found a sales condition which was forcing several hundred southern jobbers to keep away from this client's products.

One large southern jobber was receiving, from the independent selling-house which handled the distribution, an extra discount which enabled him to sell these products to retailers at a price lower than the jobbers could buy them.

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A recommendation was made to change this condition. The selling house fought the situation. The client saw the wisdom of the recommendation and issued instructions to stop selling to the large jobber.

At a very recent meeting of the southern jobbers' association two representatives of the client outlined the plan to stop selling the large jobber. The southern jobbers' association appointed a committee to handle the matter and the business which resulted from the small jobbers greatly exceeded the business from the one large jobber.

.

A new food advertiser was anxious to know the type of home that prefers his product and the amount of business that the average retailer can do. The agency arranged with a grocery-store to put on a series of tests. There was a week of window-display, a week of local advertising and display. Everything was done to push it. Then the repeat business without the

activity was watched. The report of this store—a typical middle-class store—was very valuable in planning work for other cities.

.

One of an agency's customers had a line of 360 items. He wanted to simplify it. His agency explored his line, and his sales records, to analyze the leading items. It formulated for him a programme of selling fewer items to his customers, and then actually helped him sell it to key-retailers.

With these results: Special order business was greatly cut down. Advertising was concentrated on the new short line, which was accepted by the trade, in larger volume than in the previous year with the long line. The line was cut to less than sixty numbers. One of those numbers alone produced in the next year 52 per cent of all the factory's business. Tremendous savings resulted not only in patterns, but in all

the small-wares which went into the trimming of the 360 styles of the product.

.

The hardest job in marketing a certain grocery specialty was not that of distribution but of getting dealers to display the product in their windows. Competition was heavy and advertisements were placed through newspapers to stimulate new business.

These newspapers were classed in three groups, according to the size of the cities. Each group was asked to work directly with the grocery trade in their cities, either through their own channels or with the client's salesmen to obtain window-displays.

As a reward for their work the newspapers giving the greatest co-operation were offered additional full pages, to be run at the conclusion of the campaign. These pages were made up as a special message to the women of that city, and under the messages was published the

entire list of grocers who consented to give the product display in their windows. Special report blanks were given to the newspapers, each recording the actual displays in each store, signed with affidavits from the grocers. In all, five full pages were awarded and hundreds of photographs were sent in showing displays. The result in sales was even greater than had been expected.

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Here are some of the activities that are all in a day's work of an agency's research department:

Making contacts with special editors of women's magazine for a client organizing a new department.

Getting contributions from several important editors for a typewriter manufacturer's booklet.

Analyzing the correspondence received by five of the important women's magazines, to

determine the actual reader-response and interest in certain subjects; three or four days spent in each editorial office.

Taking entire charge of copyrighting clients' advertisements and booklets.

Investigating charities before clients contribute.

Supplying portfolios of current competitive advertising for several customers, regularly every three months.

Making a study of the "Educational Extension" work being done by large national advertisers to supplement their advertising.

Getting a list of sport events throughout Europe for the summer for a travel advertiser.

Locating Oliver Twist costumes for the use of demonstrators in stores.

Interviewing several Chinese on the proper type of bank leaflet to prepare for a bank's foreign division (color preferences, wording, etc.).

Buying all the packaged cookies on the mar-

ket to learn methods of packing, price, and attractiveness of display.

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When quick volume was wanted for a product in the building trade, the agency planned and prepared for the jobbers a programme which offered 5,000 lines of advertising in their local newspapers at no cost to them if they reached the quota set. If they failed, they paid for a proportional per cent of the campaign, corresponding to the per cent of their quota which they failed to reach.

Every jobber made 100 per cent or more of his quota. And the tonnage resulting oversold the factory.

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The original owners of a drug-store product knew little about an analysis of their sales. One of the first recommendations made to the new owners was an adequate sales breakdown, geographically, by sizes, by gross and by dollars, by month.

INCIDENTS OF AGENCY SERVICE

With these figures available the agency prepared a series of graphic sales charts for the monthly guidance of the manufacturer's sales department and of the agency.

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An advertiser contemplated the use of bill-board space in a certain community to produce business among tourists for a summer branch. The agency sent a man to the locality before going ahead with the job, as it had a suspicion that there was considerable antagonism on the part of local interests against bill-board advertising. This was found to be true and the investigation avoided a venture which might have been damaging to the customer.

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In working on dies for stamping on a new product, designed by the agency from original wax relief to finished master die, the agency made use of a process which was new to the manufacturers and which led them to change

their system for dies, with a consequent saving of money.

Instead of cutting a new die every time one wears out, which was their process, a master steel die is made from which the others are stamped as required. This operation is purely mechanical and saves hand labor.

Labels That Won't Stay On

XVII

UP in Schenectady they have conducted laboratory experiments to make a certain piece of wire carry a greater load of electricity than was ever carried before. Similarly, it's been the job of advertising men to make a certain advertisement carry a greater load. All the opinions you hear about whether an advertisement is "good" or "bad," all the discussions of copy and art, of the relative values of periodicals, centre about this one purpose: To put into a certain area an arrangement of words and picture which will most effectively carry a message; and then to choose for that area a publication which will carry the

message to the greatest number of interested people at the most moderate cost.

A publisher's representative may say:

"There are 390,000 people in the United States with incomes over \$8,000 a year. Our circulation is 385,000."

To him there is an overwhelming argument in this coincidence. To the buyer it seems natural to ask:

"What makes you think they are the same people?"

"We made an investigation of our circulation lists in five parts of the country," is the ready answer. "Seventy-three per cent owned their own cars, had electric wiring in their homes, knew how to play the phonograph, the vacuum cleaner, and the ukulele."

"How many homes did you investigate?" the buyer asks.

"A total of fifty in each community."

"Two hundred and fifty, altogether?"

"That's right."

"Out of your total circulation of 385,000?"

"Well, yes."

"And you think that's a good cross-section?"

"Why not?"

To-day the buyer wants to know not merely "How many?" but "Who are they?"

Not so many years ago the seller of advertising was never asked impertinent questions. If he had a publication which appeared with some degree of regularity and which was printed legibly on white paper with black ink it didn't matter much how many subscribers he had, how old they were, how much money they had to spend, their sex, or whether they could read or write. Then advertisers became curious about numbers. This intrusion was deeply resented in many quarters. Even to-day we occasionally hear the remark:

"We don't believe in the A. B. C. Our publisher thinks his word is good enough."

When contract departments first became interested in the quality of circulation they drew more hostile fire. The late and beloved Uncle Henry Wilson of the old *Cosmopolitan* silenced

critics who questioned the quality of his magazine's circulation by the classic remark:

"There can't be a million manicures."

Even to-day the chief difference between the view-points of the buyer and seller, as it may be observed from a somewhat neutral position in the agency business, is that the buyer considers quality as well as quantity, while the seller is too frequently confining himself to an analysis of quantity.

From time to time the contract-department men in New York agencies are routed out of bed at four o'clock on three or four successive mornings to take part in a newspaper readers' investigation conducted by the metropolitan newspapers.

It is perfectly amazing, they report, to see what a difficult thing it is to sort people in classes. The last person in the world you would expect to see buying *The News* is buying it, and the last person you would think to find buying *The Times* is buying it.

That is the disappointing fact about people.

They may run true to form in other ways, but they certainly refuse to be pigeonholed.

There is a bootblack in Kansas City, it is reported, who pays as much as \$14 for a felt hat quite regularly. There is a millionaire's widow in New York who will gladly spend 15 cents in gasoline and a whole morning in time to save 12 cents on her morning's marketing. A Middle-Western man still lives in a two-family house, although he has made a fortune. His tastes have changed not at all. He has gratified just one whim. He owns two Rolls-Royces.

Figures Needn't Stagger

XVIII

ONE point on which academic interest centres around advertising is about the huge sums that are said to be spent in advertising. Merely to recite staggering figures is to give an impression of waste.

Any figures about this country are staggering, especially about this country's business.

Remember that most manufacturers want to tell the public about their products—not just the nice people, not just the roughnecks, but *all* the people. That's a lot of people.

There are more than twenty million homes in the United States. Just mail a post-card to each of those homes and it would cost you \$200,000 merely to buy the cards. Another

penny apiece would probably be enough to let you print your message on each card and write the address. Two or three of such post-cards and zip! would go one of those million-dollar appropriations which you hear mentioned so lightly. And no one would know that anything had happened.

Fortunately that isn't the way a careful manufacturer spends his advertising appropriation. For there are magazines and newspapers to carry a message into millions of homes at a fraction of a cent per home.

There are other ways, too, of impressing a name and a message on millions. It takes a lot of impressions to make a customer and a lot of customers to make a business. Eight thousand dollars may sound staggering for one page once in one national weekly until you realize that in reality you are paying only \$22.71 to reach more than 8,000 homes in Grand Rapids, \$30.40 for more than 10,000 in Toledo, and \$4.97 for nearly 2,000 in Mobile. The total is large only because this is a big country.

Improving a Business *from Within*

XIX

THE head of a large Middle-Western agency put down his pen and pushed back a pile of letters which he had been signing.

"I wonder," he said, "if anybody realizes how much time and effort we spend in the work of the Association. Here I am, just the chairman of one committee. Yet this afternoon has been like every Saturday afternoon all winter. I've been answering my Association mail—letters to my committeemen, to other members of the Association and the officers, to publishers—fifteen or twenty, all told.

"I wonder, too," he went on, "whether ad-

vertisers and publishers and agency men who aren't members realize what the Association is doing for them to make advertising a sounder, better business."

He was speaking of the American Association of Advertising Agencies—the only national organization devoted to raising the standards of advertising agency work in this country.

"When the agents first got together at a luncheon in New York many of them were not even acquainted," once wrote Newcomb Cleveland, who, with his associate, A. W. Erickson, was there. "The atmosphere was characterized by frigidity and reserve. But gradually that has all changed. Reticence has been displaced by frankness, distrust by confidence.

"The record of the Association is an outstanding example of what can be accomplished by an organization whose members work steadily together year after year for the benefit of all."

There had been local organizations of agencies in the principal cities of the country prior

to 1917, but it was in that year that the Four A's, as it is generally called, was formed, with William H. Johns, of New York, as its first president.

The agency business had been a lonely business, surrounded by very keen competition and characterized by a good deal of secrecy. To-day the competition is still present, keener perhaps than ever, but the secrecy and the isolation have disappeared.

It is a voluntary association, not for profit. Its charter membership in 1917 included 111 agencies. There have been mergers and other changes which have removed some of those names from the rolls, and there have been many elections. Now, early in 1928, there are 142 members. Many of these agencies have branch offices; the total number of branches is seventy-two.

Any agency which has proved its financial stability and which conducts its business according to the standards of the Association is eligible for membership. Many of them—in fact, the

majority—are small in size. Mere volume does not make an agency good. Some of the best advertising work to-day is being done by some of the smallest agencies.

All the strong agencies in the United States are not members; some of the strongest, for one reason or another, have never applied for membership. But while there are perhaps 1,500 agencies in the country, something like 80 per cent of all American national advertising is produced by members of the Four A's.

When a new agency is formed to-day it need not travel the hard path of getting experience by the costly method of trial and error. It can go to the Association's headquarters in New York for advice on dozens of daily questions which the young agency of fifteen years ago had to try to answer for itself. Plenty of other men have travelled that path before, and the curious part of the spirit in this Four A's is that its members are eager to tell anything they can to make a sound conscientious young agency's progress smoother and swifter.

It is a working association with none of the hip-hip-hurrying which frequently characterizes business gatherings.

"I've been trying to figure out why this meeting is so different," an observer remarked recently at a Four A's annual convention. "At last I've discovered the answer. At most conventions some one is trying to sell something to some one else. Here no one is selling anybody anything. Every one is here to work."

These once-a-year gatherings occupy two days. It is the one occasion when the whole membership is invited to take time off from its individual enterprises and attend. The last two of these conventions have been held in Washington, where the membership, away from its offices, could concentrate on the business of its sessions.

It was at the first of these Washington meetings, in 1926, that President Coolidge made his remarkable speech on advertising, in the course of which he said:

"When we stop to consider the part which

advertising plays in the modern life of production and trade we see that basically it is that of education. It informs its readers of the existence and nature of commodities by explaining the advantages to be derived from their use and creates for them a wider demand. It makes new thoughts, new desires, and new actions. By changing the attitude of mind it changes the material condition of the people. Somewhere I have seen ascribed to Abraham Lincoln the statement that 'In this and like communities public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment nothing can fail; without it nothing can succeed; consequently he who moulds public sentiment goes deeper than he who enacts statutes or pronounces decisions. He makes statutes and decisions possible to be executed.'

"Advertising creates and changes this foundation of all popular action, public sentiment, or public opinion. It is the most potent influence in adopting and changing the habits and modes of life, affecting what we eat, what we

wear, and the work and play of the whole nation. Formerly it was an axiom that competition was the life of trade. Under the methods of the present day it would seem to be more appropriate to say that advertising is the life of trade."

Much of the day-to-day work of the Association is done by committees usually composed of representatives of different parts of the country and reporting at quarterly periods to the Executive Board assembled in New York.

One committee of great value, for example, is concerned with agency finance—to help its members to be sound business men in their own affairs. Mighty few bankers have had intimate contact with many agencies, and no banker has ever had the opportunity to analyze and comment on more than a hundred agency statements once or twice a year. Yet that is what the Association's Finance Committee has done. And it has had the advantage of following the

progress of most of these agencies, all submitting their statements voluntarily, ever since 1920.

In that year, in the presidency of Harry Dwight Smith (then in Cleveland and now in New York), this committee started work with the late Charles R. Erwin of Chicago and John Benson of Chicago working as its members. There are many member agencies who believe that if the Association's whole value to them had been its reflection in the unselfish, constructive help of this committee, it would have been many times worth while.

Quantities in magazine circulation had been very carefully measured by the Audit Bureau of Circulations. But it remained for the Four A's under the presidency of Stanley Resor of New York to make the first definite estimate of quality. In a study that covered specimen lists gladly supplied by nearly a hundred publications, nearly 400,000 names were tabulated and analyzed for income.

Later an equally elaborate check was made to see how much duplication exists in the circulations of the principal magazines. To-day the reports which resulted from more than three years of study under Professor Daniel E. Starch, formerly of Harvard, are being used by the contract departments of the member agencies. It is natural, of course, that those who didn't show up particularly well in these tabulations should become a little playful in discussing the results. But the people who find that these figures are mighty useful tools in their daily jobs never can be induced to go back to a time when lists were made up by ear.

There are committees which have standardized the forms used in dealing with publishers and the forms used by publishers in supplying information to agencies. There has been a committee keeping the members acquainted with the progress of radio. There have been studies of cost accounting and standardized methods of audit.

The agricultural press, the technical and business papers, the foreign-language newspapers published in this country—each has had a group of agency men working with it to give their fellow members information and to straighten out common difficulties.

The colleges conducting advertising courses have had the benefit of the closest co-operation with another committee headed by a former professor in an Eastern University, Paul Cherington. It is this committee's object to help the colleges make advertising a well-trained profession in the broadest sense.

Every problem of an agency's work with type, engravings, and printing has been studied and reports have been issued that have meant tremendous savings to the clients of members. Only recently has the Mechanical Production committee, working with similar groups from other organizations, been able to arrive at a standardization of colors for engraving and printing.

These are just a few of the activities which are constantly being carried on for the good of advertising.

It is inevitable, of course, that a stabilizing influence such as this association should progress only as fast as the average opinion of its members. It is not engaged in trying to reform anything. It is simply gathering facts and spreading information about a few wholesome truths.

For instance, it believes that there is no health in the practice of preparing plans and advertisements for an advertiser in the hope of inveigling him into spending his money. Obviously, it isn't a good thing for the agency, since it cannot help being a costly experience if pursued far enough. Obviously, too, it isn't a good thing for the publisher, since the usual result of speculatively prepared material means a short-lived advertiser and a black eye for advertising. But how does it affect the advertiser?

He may decide that he wants to start out on an advertising programme. He may talk to a

dozen advertising agencies. If he is inexperienced, one of his first requests will be phrased about like this: "We expect to do some advertising. If you show us something we like, we will employ you."

An intelligent advertising agency replies:

"How in the world could we come in and with a few minutes' conversation with you, or even a few hours' study, hope to devise a plan and prepare copy which we could stand behind and on which we could urge you to spend anything like the sum which you have in mind?"

More than one advertiser who started out with the idea that if he could get something which appealed to his imagination, something tricky and inviting, he would start an advertising campaign, has been dissuaded from using such short-sighted tactics in the formation of an advertising programme.

This protective service to advertising as a whole is being rendered every day by the constructive agencies of the country and is keeping large amounts of money from being spent fool-

ishly by the employment of half-baked ideas prepared to catch the fancy of the advertiser rather than to sell his merchandise.

Other advertisers have been convinced for one reason or another that they wanted to employ national advertising long before their distribution warranted such an effort—or that they wanted to go into broadcasting—or try sky-writing—or go on bill-boards. If they were fortunate enough to talk to an advertising agency whose experience qualified it, they have often been saved substantial sums by being advised to proceed slowly and more wisely, first, in the selection of an advertising agency, and second, in the study and analysis of their sales possibilities and in working out an advertising programme which more closely fits their individual needs.

Another matter on which the Association's view-point is for the good of advertising is the uniformity of agency compensation. Here, again, no mere theory is the deciding factor, just common sense.

The ultimate object of all compensation to the agency is to put it in a position to render a type of service which will make advertising pay the advertiser.

Experience has shown that the operation of an advertising agency so organized as to render this type of service to the advertiser, entails a cost which enables the agency to make only a reasonable profit on a uniform agency commission of 15 per cent.

It is to the advantage of all advertisers that their agencies be equipped to render a type of service which will make their advertising pay.

If an advertising agency believes that it can render its advertisers a lower type of service, and thereby make a higher percentage of profit, it is disabused of this idea because the advertiser sees that he is not getting all that he should get from his agency and soon looks elsewhere.

The result of this system of uniform agency commission is that it is within the power of all agencies to render a type of service which will

pay the advertiser, and that those which do not render a service of this type are automatically checked by the self-interest of the advertiser.

If the system of commission were other than uniform, those agencies which render service receiving less than the current commission would automatically be eliminated from the field, and those agencies receiving more than the current commission might not earn the profits which they would make.

As the situation stands to-day, the commission is uniform except in a very small share of the publications of the country.

The advertising agency is so fully concerned with the job of making the advertiser's advertising pay, that he cannot from his own self-interest stop to consider those few exceptions which deviate from the uniform commission.

Even if it were to be admitted that an agency was so short-sighted that it would consider weighing one medium against another according to the question of which one paid the higher commission, the agency's own self-in-

terest in doing good work and maintaining a reputation for making advertising pay the advertiser, would dictate that he could not allow himself to be swayed by this consideration.

Within any organization of individually owned agencies, particularly in a business as individualistic as the agency business, there can never be identical opinions and practices. There will always be some variation.

But the encouraging fact in the Four A's existence, in its work and its progress, is that it is constantly raising the standards of its business from *within*. In a comparatively short life, judged by the years of the American Medical Association, the Bar Association, and the American Institute of Architects, it has made long strides. These strides can be measured principally in terms of benefits to advertisers who are to-day receiving from most agencies an improved quality and an increased quantity of service.

"The ultimate reformers of business must be the business men themselves," said Calvin

Coolidge in that same speech. "My conception of what advertising agencies want is a business world in which the standards are so high that it will only be necessary for them to tell the truth about it. It will never be possible to create a permanent desire for things which do not have a permanent worth. It is my belief that more and more the trade of our country is conforming to these principles."

Getting Along Together



XX

ANY one who has observed the advertising business has noticed that an agency will make an excellent record for one advertiser and apparently will fail dismally for another. Why should it?

The same men, using the same set of brains, with the same equipment and the same wealth of magazines, newspapers, and other media from which to choose, have certain customers who have been with them for years and others who stay for a year or so and then tell the world and sundry that they “couldn’t get anything out of that outfit.”

Is it reasonable to suppose that in the one

case the agency has tackled its job with enthusiasm while in the other it has decided to take as much and do as little as possible before the advertiser comes to his senses?

Suppose you are planning to build a house. You hear of the work of a good architect. He has planned two houses occupied by your neighbors.

You visit these houses and look through them with unusual interest and afterward you say, in the bosom of your family:

"I don't see how the same man could have built those two houses. The Robinsons' is a corker—roomy and comfortable and full of pleasant and unexpected ideas. But the McCullums' is a sight! Did you ever see so many trick cupboards and chopped-up rooms? They haven't a room of decent size on the second floor, but they certainly have a lot of sleeping-porches and linen-closets!"

That architect could tell you a sad story. He could tell you that when the Robinsons came to build their house they didn't greet him with a

bundle of clippings from *House Adorable*. They didn't start by telling him that the butler's pantry must have a northern exposure or that the nursery had to have an indoor running-track.

They just showed him their lot and told him how much they had to spend and how big their family was and let him get started on his own idea of the kind of house that would fit their taste, family, purse, and lot.

But the McCullums! They knew the dimensions of every room. They had an exterior upon which they had settled even though you couldn't stuff it with their rooms without making it bulge on one side and sag at the top. They had more closets than windows. In their house they had more ideas than nails.

He did the best he could, poor soul. But he hated that house as it reared itself on paper before him, and he hated it still more as it progressed and as the McCullums made him lop off the sun-porch to make room for a crokinole court for young Mr. Harold McCullum.

While everything was being delivered right on the dot for the Robinson house, telegrams were arriving to tell why shipments for the McCullums were lost on a siding near Ashtabula. Everything breezed along for the Robinsons; every union on earth called a strike just as its members set foot on the McCullum threshold.

There are advertising programmes like that and there are advertisers named Robinson and others named McCullum.

When the McCullums start to advertise they begin by haggling over terms. You can't tell them. They *know* that agencies cut their rates and rebate part of their commissions. They know because they have had three that did in the last two years. Maybe that's why they have had three in the last two years and are now looking for a good agency.

Well, all right; they will pay full rates. But they'll make this new agency earn its commissions. Then the fun begins.

The first meeting consists of a monologue by

the president, a recital of the long and glorious history of the house of McCullum. At the next meeting the vice-president explains all the things that can't be done. The sales manager makes it clear that his salesmen take no stock in advertising and would prefer to have the appropriation distributed among them at the end of the year.

When the agency submits its first draft of the advertising plan, accompanied by rough sketches and copy ideas, the comma-hounds are unleashed. That picture doesn't look like their factory. This word should never be spelled this way. It's a house rule.

Hadn't they explained that the president's wife hated blue? And that since the secretary was poisoned by a lobster on his last trip to New York he had never liked red? And that the firm signature, designed originally by a sign-painter in the winter of '78, must always appear exactly in the same sacred form? Well, they had meant to explain all these traditions and they supposed it would take any new or-

ganization a little while to get the hang of these things.

"They'll be all right," the agency representatives assure one another on the way to the train, "as soon as we get better acquainted."

But the copy has to be passed around to get the O. K. of seven executives, each one of whom makes comic comments on the margin. The illustrations are subjected to the solemn scrutiny of a jury composed of the president, his stenographer, the advertising manager, and one of the men just in off the road.

The list of publications is changed to conform to the periodicals usually found on the sales manager's library-table at home. Six sets of proofs have to be submitted before everybody is satisfied, and three of the magazines have to make corrections a week after closing date. And when the advertisements come out, nobody likes anything about them.

Young Jim Robinson, on the other hand, inherited his father's business and proceeded to

show that money doesn't always fall on an empty head. He thought that very likely the old business could be doubled if twice as many people bought his product. The magazine and newspaper people had been calling on him for years and he had enjoyed hearing them talk about the way other manufacturers had applied advertising. Occasionally an agency man had dropped in for a pleasant talk. Maybe Jim had been lucky, but no one had ever told him that if he took thirteen color pages in three national weeklies he could wire for a Rolls and spend the rest of his life on wheels.

So, when he had steered his business for a year or so alone, he asked some of his magazine friends to recommend a number of agencies. He kept a list of the names they suggested and he found that seven agencies had been mentioned most frequently.

Then he wrote each of them a letter and asked them to call. He *didn't* start each interview by saying:

"Now you must remember that while you may have had experience with many kinds of business, *our business is peculiar.*"

He simply explained his company's position, described its product and its policies, and asked each agency whether it would be interested in being considered.

Would they? They should say they would! For each of them had known something about the Robinson business and in refreshing their memories about it in Mr. Dun's and Mr. Bradstreet's unemotional pages they had found that it had exhausted most of the upper case A's in those gentlemen's vocabularies.

But young Mr. Robinson didn't lean back in his chair and say: "All right, then go ahead and sell me."

Instead he handed each agency's representative a carbon copy of a questionnaire.

"You might glance over these questions," he said. "If anything isn't clear, let me know. I'd like to have the answers in a week or ten days."

He stood up and held out his hand.

The interview was over and the high-voltage salesmen hadn't had a chance to uncork a single volt! As they walked away, gradually they deflated. Here was one man who wanted facts instead of oratory. If he had been engaging a man to take the stump for him in a political campaign he might have been interested in hearing the desk pounded in action. But he knew that, in advertising, type and pictures must take the place of elocution.

No chance of anæsthetizing this man until he was numb and would forget to ask about some of their weak points. In a thorough way young Mr. Robinson asked each candidate to describe itself.

In other words, young Mr. Robinson had an idea that engaging an advertising agency was very much like hiring a sales manager or any other important executive. He didn't strive to give the impression of being hard to know.

He asked only one trick question. It was:

“In what particular kind of advertising do you regard yourselves as experts, or specialists?”

He wanted to spot those who would speak up with:

“Yes. We have made a special study of the product which you sell.”

Two agencies did. Out they went without further consideration. He knew they were bluffing and he wanted to eliminate the bluffers at the start.

He wrote to all the customers of the other agencies and after the replies came in two more agencies were removed from the list.

It's a curious thing about letters from an agency's customers to an inquiring advertiser. Of course none of them is going to say:

“Blank, Blink & Blixen is a very poor agency. That's why we use them.”

But just the same there are degrees of warmth in these letters. If all of an agency's customers send merely a perfunctory acknowledgment, it can't be a very exciting agency.

But if a fair number of them seem to have taken off their coats, if through the typewritten sentences there shines out a little heat of enthusiasm, it's likely to be a good agency.

So young Mr. Robinson talked to only three agencies after he had carefully read the answers to his questionnaire.

He didn't ask to see a lot of half-baked copy, hastily prepared on speculation to catch his fancy. He knew that it had taken him several years to get his knowledge of his business and that he didn't intend to invest his advertising appropriation on a recommendation based on a two-hour study of it.

In fact, his secretary was busy these days packing up and returning portfolios of "Plans and Copy Suggestions" sent in by other agencies who were still wasting on these speculative efforts the time which might have been devoted to such capable service to their customers that on their records they would have been invited to talk to prospective advertisers.

He carefully studied the specimen advertise-

ments prepared by the three agencies for their customers. He read the copy. He read the headlines twice, because he knew that many magazine readers would read them only once and many more would read nothing else.

He analyzed the layouts, he considered the judgment shown in the choice of artists, he looked for the basic ideas of each advertisement, and weighed the method by which it had been carried out to see whether the most had been made of it.

Then he had several long talks with the three agencies and finally made his selection.

One factor which counted in his judgment was the matter of personalities. For he knew that in a relationship so intimate as the one between a manufacturer and his agency it is vital that they like one another and speak the same language. He knew that unless he regarded his agency as a partner, engaged in the common enterprise of making his business go forward, there would be no success in its efforts.

So they all went to work together.

There were adjustments of view-point in the next few months. There were minor mistakes on both sides. There was a certain amount of give and take, as there is in any very personal and very human relationship.

But there were no misunderstandings. There was no covering up. There was no brittleness, no attitude of daring the agency to please on one side and trimming to please on the other.

Both sides sought facts. And more facts. And more facts. And presently the facts themselves showed what ought to be done. The agency, knowing people and how to interpret facts for people, arranged and presented the facts in the form of advertising.

It was all very simple and smooth because it rested on a solid foundation, a foundation of mutual confidence built of mutual understanding.

"When I hire a man," said young Mr. Robinson, "it's as much my job to see that he makes

good as it is his. It's as much my fault if he falls down. I hire my good men for life.

“When I needed an agency, I was hiring a group of men but the principle was the same. And it certainly works!”

The Sloganeer



XXI

THERE is a writer in New York who gets purple over the fact that nobody likes his advertising ideas. He is constantly making up slogans for imaginary companies. Usually they are parodies on other slogans already well known.

He never seems to realize that a parody suggests the original and advertises it more than it would advertise anything else.

Thinking that a slogan is a good form of advertising is the surest sign of the amateur. He probably calls it "the advertising game," too.

No slogan is worth anything until it has had about a million dollars spent on it. Some lines

are easier for people to remember than others, but the public isn't sitting around waiting for us to make up a new smart crack. It already has a number of things to think about, and to inject a new idea you have to drill and then pour in the dynamite and then blast.

Moreover, a good slogan should contain the name of the product. That's the only way to make sure that people won't remember your slogan and forget your product.

A slogan has about the same relation to a successful advertising programme as a college yell has to a university education.

*Why Young Alumni Leave the Newspaper Business and—**

—
XXII

1. "It must be awfully good training, but what do you expect to do eventually?"

2. "How does it happen that there is always a reporter there whenever anything happens?"

3. "Here's something I've always wanted to know: How do they make the columns come out even?"

4. "Do they tell you what to write, or do you just wander around and write about anything you see?"

* Written for the *Princeton Tiger* in 1914 after two years in the advertising business following four years on the *New York Sun*.

5. "Are you on the night shift?"
6. "I suppose you look at it as a kind of post-graduate course?"
7. "It certainly must give you a mighty good insight into things in general."
8. "When you telegraph an article from out-of-town, do you send it all written out or in skeleton form?"
9. "Well, lots of prominent men have started their careers in newspaper offices."
10. "How can I tell what you write? Why don't you sign your initials?"
11. "Do they change what you write much?"
12. "Are you still a cub reporter or have you passed that stage?"
13. "I suppose you get all the theatre tickets you want. Why don't you send me some when you can't use them?"
14. "Do you have to know shorthand?"
15. "It must be awfully interesting work!"

*Why They Wonder Whether,
After All, They Were Right
in Switching to Advertising*

1. "Advertising? Well, there's lots of money spent in that business these days!

2. "I've always thought I could write ads if I set about it. I get a lot of pretty clever ideas. But I never can remember them."

3. "Which is done first? Do you write your stuff to fit a picture or does an artist illustrate what you write?"

4. "I should think it would be awfully hard to know what to say."

5. "Well, it seems as if there wasn't anything in the magazines these days but ads!"

6. "How much does the back of the *Ladies' Home Journal* cost for just one issue? It does? Just think of that!"

7. "I always look through the advertisements in a magazine. Lots of times they are more interesting than the magazine itself!"

8. "Do you write any of those poems in the

subway? I saw one the other day that went er-a-er-a-er, O well! I can't think of it now, but it certainly was lame in some of its feet!"

9. "How much do those big artists get for a drawing?"

10. "Do you have to try all the things you write about?"

11. "Well, after all, advertising is just applying psychology to business."


12. "Don't you ever get tired, just looking around for ideas all day long?"

13. "Do you intend to stay right there in that business, or is it leading to something else?"

14. "Do you really think that advertising pays?"

15. "Whaddye mean, advertising agents?"

Must We Confer?



XXIII

ALMOST every comic writer feels certain of a very hearty laugh when he mentions the word "conference." It is assumed that in a "conference" nothing occurs except conversation about golf, bootleggers, and smoking-car anecdotes.

In so far as these thrusts have slowed down and the business man who likes to make everything about himself mysterious and important, they have been very useful. Anything which crumples the stuffed-shirt is useful. When once the evasions and pompous circumlocutions of business have been removed, there will be time to get something done.

But the trouble with the satirists of business

is that they aren't business men. Even with every allowance for their pose of knowing nothing about business, it is still apparent that they know nothing about business.

Conference is not always merely a comic word. It is often tragic. It is frequently the scene of murder—the murder of very useful ideas.

That's because thinking and talking are two very different processes. They call for different talents. The man who can think is often a very indifferent talker, and talking is the life-blood of the conference.

"That advertising conference comes this afternoon," says the sales manager, putting his head in the president's door. "Shall we ask everybody in?"

"Yes. Better have every one's idea," says the president, and then as fast as typewriter keys can impress carbon paper the clans are gathered.

Into the conference-room they file at the

appointed hour. Of all the dead spots in any office the conference-room is the deadest. Once an advertising man tried to brighten up his own conference-room by hanging up a series of vivid original posters. But he took them down after one of his customers entered the room, paused for a moment, and exclaimed: "Who in hell painted those?"

Conference-rooms are either premeditated or they just happen.

If they are premeditated, the man who plans them tries to make them look as much as possible like a photograph of a Wall Street directors' room where railroads are merged. The round-shouldered mahogany chairs are ranged up and down the sides and at the ends of the long mahogany table, with white pads of paper and sharp pencils neatly placed in front of each chair. The paper and pencils are important, for otherwise there would be nothing for the conferees to tear into small pieces and nothing on which to draw their curlicues.

If the conference-room has just happened, it is probably tucked away in a corner of the factory where the steam-pipes chatter freely, where the trucks on the cobblestones outside can be heard most clearly, and where the occasional thud of heavy loads dropped on the floor above will punctuate the most interesting parts of the discussion. A creaky elevator just outside the door helps, too. And the acoustics are so arranged that every one's voice sounds hollow and blurred. The echo is perfect.

The executives flock in. There is a good deal of hilarity, not quite genuine, in an evident attempt on the part of the less substantial to appear at ease. The president comes in exactly on time, waves the sales manager toward the chairman's seat, and hurriedly settles into a chair, looking about him with short nods to everybody. Then he says: "Where's Jenkins? Send for Jenkins. He ought to be here. Get Jenkins."

"I know he planned to be here," the assistant

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to Jenkins exclaims. "He spoke of it this morning."

"Well, he's late. Funny, those who ought to be most interested in a meeting never seem able to get to it on time."

The door opens. With a nervous smile Jenkins slips into a chair nearest the door.

"Come over here, Mr. Jenkins," calls the president. "You ought to hear all of this."

The meeting is now ready to begin, the air full of electricity, every one on edge, every one thinking solely of how to dodge the president's sallies and how to appear in the best possible light.

Perhaps that is the reason so little is accomplished at meetings of this kind. No one is relaxed, no one is able to think quietly about the subject of the meeting, no one feels able to stay out of the discussion.

Presently, in this meeting, as in most conferences, the various types begin to disclose themselves.

The watch-dog of the treasury gets into action very early. Usually he isn't the company's treasurer. Most treasurers listen attentively and say little. They never draw curlicues on their pads. Now and then they write down a phrase or a few figures and the questions they ask are pertinent and vital. Otherwise some one else would be treasurer.

But the professional watch-dog has what he would describe as an inquiring mind. He's not going to let anybody waste any of the company's money. His own department having been criticised for extravagance, this is his field day. It is his chance to sound wise and look severe and take pot-shots at anything expressed in dollars. Even when figures aren't mentioned he waits for the end of a paragraph and then pounces at the speaker with: "That's all very well, but what would it *cost*?"

He is not to be confused with the policies man in the next chair. The policies man is probably gray in the company's service—disillusioned, cold, exacting, but with a twinkle

in his watery eye. He knows what the company's attitude was toward jobbers in 1887 and how its discounts were explained to the trade just after the war, Civil or World.

Every conference also has its trimmer. He slides deep down in his chair, and either closes his eyes to register concentration or darts swift glances at each speaker. He is all attention in the early stages of the meeting, especially when the president gives the slightest indication of how his mind is turning. A foxy president could ruin a trimmer. Sometimes he does, but that's after he has found out that the man is a trimmer. For until he is discovered, the trimmer gives every appearance of being wise beyond his years and possessed of seasoned ideas which, oddly enough, always exactly coincide with the president's.

Compared with a good, well-oiled trimmer, those old sycophants of French court life, who would swear that yesterday was to-morrow if a Louis said so, were as outspoken as Borah. A trimmer treads softly until he sees the way the

presidential mind is working, and then he fights like a lion. All he cares about the wind is which way it is blowing. He will let anybody pick the nation's cats so long as he can know which way they are going to jump.

Give him credit; the trimmer travels far on nothing but a knowledge of the boss's vanity. Find a vain president and near him is a trimmer as surely as the killyloo bird follows the rhinoceros.

In the next chair sits the office stupid. You would think that he would learn to stay away from conferences. He never gets anything out of them but blame. It matters little whether he has anything to do with the question under discussion. At some time some one is going to look around quickly for a door-step on which to leave an orphan idea. There sits the stupid.

"The idea didn't originate with me," the speaker will exclaim. "I heard our worthy friend here suggesting it the other day. Perhaps he had better explain."

The stupid comes up for air. At the moment

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he was weighing in his mind the comparative advantages of leaving the girl's head on his pad all white or trying to shade it. So he merely looks genial and non-committal.

"That's the trouble with half-baked ideas," declares the sales manager. "What we need is more straight thinking in this organization."

The stupid realizes that something has been hung on his door-bell again. He becomes morose. People start to question him. He answers yes or no. They try to draw him out and he tries to say things which will sound witty and cutting. His face grows red. Presently it seems that for most of the company's mistakes he is to blame. He crawls into his shell and returns to his artistic pursuits.

Now suppose that into a meeting of this sort are brought the company's plans for advertising. For minor executives a meeting about advertising is a gala occasion. Their own departments have been under scrutiny. Now they can sound wise and sensible merely by prefacing what they say with:

"Of course I don't pose as knowing anything about advertising, but——"

Under this guise you may be as captious as you please and no one can quarrel with you.

"Well, gentlemen, our advertising agents are here," begins the sales manager, "with their recommendations for this year's advertising."

"How much did we spend last year?" asks the watch-dog.

"We'll come to that in a moment," says the sales manager, eager to get on.

"Have you been over these plans?" asks the president.

"Only hurriedly."

"Then they don't represent your combined judgment? I mean yours and the advertising department's as well as the agency's?" The president is severe.

"In a measure, yes," hedges the sales manager.

"Well, let's hear them," says the president.

"But how can we pass on these ideas," in-

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terposes the trimmer, even more severely, "unless we know that you all agree on them?"

"Shall we hear what our agency has prepared?" the sales manager asks. "They have brought their copy suggestions too, and a great deal of art work."

"Ah, pictures!" exclaims the stupid. There's something he can criticise.

"We'll come to that in a moment," the sales manager explodes.

"We're only wasting time in this way," says the president. "If you have anything to tell us, let's have it."

The advertising agency representatives, with this auspicious start, launch into their proposed plans.

Every man present listens with half his mind. With the other half he is wondering how he can appear to good advantage when the speaker pauses and the talk becomes general again.

"May I interrupt a moment?" It is the watch-dog. "Did I understand you to say that

the total sum you are recommending is approximately the same as this past year?"

He is told that his hearing was correct.

"I just wanted to be sure." His eye roves around the table to make sure that every one understands that at least one person here will put up with no foolishness.

When the plans are read, the agency men have succeeded in bringing a little relaxation and disinterested thought into the session. Then comes the copy itself.

Far down the valley you can hear the baying of the comma-hounds. When the first layout has been shown and the first piece of copy read, they are unleashed.

"Is that supposed to be a tree? Looks more like a bunch of bananas," laughs the watchdog.

"Our signature is never written that way," declares the policy man. "We have used it in the same way for forty-eight years and would never change it. We have put thousands and thousands of dollars behind it."

"Indeed we have," the trimmer agrees.

"Don't you think this copy is pretty long?" asks the president.

"Exactly the way it impressed me," the trimmer chimes in. "Nobody reads long advertisements."

"Another thing," the president goes on. "You want my comment, I suppose, though of course you gentlemen are experts at all this and I'm not. But I was wondering how many people who read these advertisements will know the meaning of the word 'audacious.' I notice you have used it here."

"I noticed the same thing as he read it." Of course the trimmer is at it again. "Just last evening my wife and I were passing a drug-store. There was a sign in the window and she asked me what a certain word in it meant. I suppose she is a typical American woman. And yet she didn't know what that word meant. I forget what it was."

"Have you got a slogan for us?" asks the stupid.

"Yes, we ought to have a slogan," agrees the president.

The stupid beams and, encouraged, goes on: "Like 'The skin you love to touch' or 'They satisfy.' "

"Of course anything like that would hardly be dignified enough for us," says the president.

"Hardly!" the trimmer hastens to say and eyes the stupid coldly. Others throw him pitying looks. He subsides.

And so it goes.

If it is a morning conference, presently every one will grow hungry and the whole matter will be left to a smaller group. If it is in the afternoon, many of those present will become weary-eyed from too much lunch, and the result will be the same.

But before the meeting breaks up it is safe to say that in every advertising meeting these twelve questions will be asked:

"Don't you think that most people only glance through the advertising pages?"

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"Which do you think is better—a right-hand or a left-hand page?"

"Do you think radio advertising is worth anything?"

"Don't you think a great deal of money is wasted in advertising every year?"

"Do you favor large space or small space?"

"What does a back cover of the *Ladies' Home Journal* cost? It *does*?"

"How do you find things in other lines?"

"Don't you think we need more cumulative effect in our advertising?"

"How can we give our copy more *punch*?"

"What percentage of their gross sales do most advertisers put into advertising?"

"Should we make a research?"

"Are all your customers as hard to please as we are?"

And then everybody gets up and shakes hands and says:

"Well, I think we got somewhere to-day, don't you? You talk it over with your people

and we'll talk it over with ours and then we'll get together and go over a few points."

The real trouble with the great American conference is not that there is too little real business; it is that there is too much acting and that so little of it is good.

It is therefore suggested that the following rules be adopted:

1. Instantly eject from the room any one starting a sentence with "Now, I think——"
2. Announce that behavior in a conference shall neither raise nor lower the salaries of those participating.
3. Oblige every one present to exclaim "You are!" when any one starts to speak by saying: "Perhaps I am out of order, but——"
4. Keep out of the room those usually invited "just to get their slants."
5. Prohibit slants.
6. Eliminate all ideas that are underdone, half-baked, or hard-boiled.

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7. Have a penalty for wise-cracks.
8. Refuse to have any opinion not substantiated by facts.
9. Limit each speaker to give speeches of thirty seconds each.
10. Provide everybody with stop-watches and ink-wells to throw if time limit is not observed.
11. Include only those who could be trusted to make a sound decision single-handed.
12. Let one of them do it and omit the conference.

How Are Your Telephone Manners?

XXIV

THE trouble all starts with the snappy executive who turns to his secretary and says:

“Miss Blotz, get Mr. Pillsbury on the phone.”

Then he remembers that he wanted to see how that new duplicating machine is working in a far corner of the office and off he goes.

Meanwhile Miss Blotz has gone to her own desk and has told the switchboard operator to get Mr. Pillsbury, of the Pillsbury Fireless Match Company. The operator calls the exchange and mutters something, the exchange

gives it back incorrectly, and so the girls chat back and forth.

Eventually the Pillsbury switchboard answers, but immediately jumps away when she is asked to hold the wire while Miss Blotz's desk telephone is being rung. So Miss Blotz admires her manicure until such time as the Pillsbury switchboard comes to life again. Then:

"Mr. Pillsbury, please."

"Whowanzim?"

"Mr. Smun's office calling."

"Of where?"

"Smun's Tasteless Olives Corporation."

"Justa minnit."

Silence and static, followed by Mr. Pillsbury's baritone: "Hello!"

"Mr. Pillsbury?" asks Miss Blotz's smiling voice.

"Yes, this is him." Mr. Pillsbury's voice wears traces of a frown.

"Mr. Smun calling you. Will you hold the wire just a second, please?" Mr. Pillsbury's

fingers drum on his desk. Miss Blotz pushes the buzzer which is supposed to sound under Mr. Smun's desk to tell him that all the obstacles of telephoning have been overcome and he may now lift his receiver with complete assurance.

But Mr. Smun, in the far corner of the office, cannot hear the buzzer. Miss Blotz presses it again. Then she leaves her desk and looks into Mr. Smun's room, finding the stately desk-chair unoccupied. She returns to the general office and glances over its length. Then she picks up another telephone and says:

"See if you can find Mr. Smun. He's somewhere around the office."

Bells jingle merrily in various private offices as the switchboard tries the most likely places. Mr. Pillsbury's fingers continue to drum. The fifth jingle dislodges a telephone-receiver near the duplicating machine.

"Is Mr. Smun there?"

"Yes, I'll call him."

"Tell'm I'm holding Mr. Pillsbury on here."

"Call for you, Mr. Smun."

"Tell her to put it in my office. Wait. Ask her if she's got Mr. Pillsbury."

"Have you got Mr. Pillsbury?"

"I toldya I had."

"She says she has."

"Put it in my office."

Mr. Pillsbury's finger-ends are getting bruised.

Mr. Smun takes his leisurely way back to his office, closes the door, lights a cigarette, settles himself comfortably, clears his throat, removes the receiver from its hook, and remarks placidly:

"Hello!"

"Hello."

"Mr. Pillsbury?"

"Yes."

"Mr. Pillsbury, this is Mr. Smun calling."

"So I've been told."

"I say this is Mr. Smun."

"Oh, all right. Go on from there."

"I just wanted you to know that we are expecting an especially good trainload of our

tasteless olives on Friday and I thought you might be interested in buying a few crates."

"Is that all you wanted?"

"Yes."

"Well, I'm not interested." And bang goes his receiver.

"Gosh, what a crab that man is," murmurs Mr. Smun. "Some men certainly have no manners at all!"

Or, to take another average case:

Mr. Smun comes in from lunch.

"Mr. Gilfish called you while you were out," says Miss Blotz.

"Well, get him."

In a moment she returns.

"I called Mr. Gilfish but he wasn't in. I left word that you had called."

"How's that?" Mr. Smun asks, absently.

"Mr. Gilfish. He called you."

"Oh, yes."

"He wasn't in."

"Now I must go over to the bank. I'll be back later." And out he goes.

A half-hour later Mr. Gilfisch returns to his office, finds a note that Mr. Smun has called him, wonders what he wanted, recalls that it was he himself who started the thing, decides that it can wait until morning, and dismisses it from his mind.

It is the next afternoon before he thinks of it again. He calls Mr. Smun's office, but finds that Mr. Smun is out. This time Mr. Gilfisch is exasperated and refuses to leave his name. He goes to see a customer.

A lull occurs in Mr. Smun's day just before five o'clock. He remembers that Mr. Gilfisch called him.

"Get Mr. Gilfisch," he says to Miss Blotz. Presently she returns with:

"He's out, Mr. Smun."

"Who is?"

"Mr. Gilfisch."

"Oh, yes."

"They hardly expect him back any more today."

"By George! Is it as late as that? So it is. Well, see you in the morning."

But Mr. Gilfish does return, gets Mr. Smun's message, puts in a call for him, and this time is thoroughly annoyed when the answer comes back:

"Gone for the day."

"Doesn't that man ever work?" Mr. Gilfish says. "Wonder some men wouldn't attend to business."

On the following morning they actually do get together by way of their respective telephones and this conversation ensues:

"That you, Smun?"

"Yes."

"This is Gilfish. You certainly are harder to reach than the President of the United States. Don't you ever attend to business?"

"I got your message and called you back."

"Well, I called you."

"Funny I didn't get it."

"What's on your mind?"

"Here's what I wanted to ask you. Do you remember that tan sweater you had on when we played golf together last summer?"

"Yes, I guess I do."

"Well, where did you get it?"

Matters no more weighty than that are cluttering up the telephone wires these days and wasting the time of otherwise useful business men—all because too few men think of the other man's convenience when they start a call.

With even normally considerate human beings the rule seems to be that they don't mind how long they keep the other fellow hanging onto a wire—unless they are trying to sell him something. Some salesmen are such poor psychologists that even when they are telephoning to a prospect they will let him get madder and madder as he passes through two or three hands while he waits and waits for the man who wants to ask a favor of him.

Would the same salesman be guilty of any other kind of discourtesy that compares to this

—and still feel that he had a chance? Would he, for instance, if he were calling in person and were told to go right into his prospect's office, send word that he would be there in a few minutes? Would he turn away from an outstretched hand of greeting to look back over his shoulder and exchange remarks with some one in the outer office?

Many of the busiest executives have discarded the intermediaries entirely. If any one calls them by telephone, he is immediately connected with them. They answer their own calls.

More than that, they never put in a call for an individual. They ask their own switchboards to get the individual's office or his secretary and add: "I'll hold the wire." The interval is rarely longer than a few seconds and when the answer comes they are ready and the individual is not kept waiting at all.

Also they take it for granted that other men, like themselves, are employing intelligent girls who can take a message and get it straight. So when a nice voice at the other end of the wire is

sorry that her boss isn't in but wants to know whether she can't do something, they actually tell her what they want to say.

These men have found that in these three ways they have clipped hours off their annual telephoning time and always find people glad to talk to them. They have brushed aside one more of the useless formalities with which a certain type of business man loves to surround himself.

"But I'm too busy to interrupt my day like that," objects the same business man.

He may be too busy but that is only another evidence that he is spending his time hopping from one thing to another, switched this way and that by anything that pops into his head. And he's the first one to complain:

"I never seem to get through. The days just aren't long enough for me. People are constantly interrupting me."

"The trouble with that kind of business man," said a very wise gentleman, "is that if he were hoeing a row of potatoes and some one

handed him a rake, he would drop the hoe and start raking with all his might."

Business has grown so complicated that the hardest job of business men is to get something done. The good old methods formerly used to try to impress people, to create a picture of importance by seeming mysterious, are doomed.

Nothing can serve business more usefully than the telephone. Nothing can clutter it up more uselessly. Nothing can cut through to an objective more swiftly. Nothing can jangle tired nerves more pitilessly. Every time you put in a call, pretend it was coming to your desk and phone as you would be phoned to. And bang! will go one more of the bits of deadwood that is slowing up business.

Those Business Luncheons



XXV

“**I**T’s very important, so why don’t we get together for lunch?”

“Fine! Where shall we make it?”

“How about the grill of the Mammoth?”

“Suits me. What time?”

“One o’clock?”

“Right you are. See you at the Hotel Mammoth at one—or would you rather call for us here?”

“Just as you say.”

“Well, perhaps we’d better meet at the hotel.”

“That’s great. See you there. So long.”

“So long.”

In such simple words as these the American business man sets the stage for his most important meetings. Particularly if the subject to be discussed has its confidential and delicate phases, he is bound to suggest that it be discussed in the most crowded, noisiest restaurant within walking distance, preferably where an orchestra dealing in modern rhythms mingles its tunes with the more vital parts of the conversation.

The arranger, who has something to sell, usually goes to lunch about 12:20. That one o'clock suggestion was a little swank on his part, to impress his prospect that he was in no hurry to get down to brass tacks. So, from force of habit, at 12:25 he puts his head in his partner's door.

"Ready? We mustn't keep them waiting."

"With you in a second."

The arranger strolls into the hall and rings for the elevator, but when the car stops the partner has not yet appeared.

"Down! Down! Going down!" shouts the

elevator man irritably, making hurry-up noises with his levers.

The arranger opens his office-door, yells to his partner who is nowhere in sight, turns back to the elevator and pretends to study the dials over the other cars. The passengers in the waiting elevator shift their footing and throw out nasty looks. The elevator man bangs his door, muttering whatever it is that elevator men mutter as they bang their doors.

Their language deserves careful study from some student of American sounds, descended, as it is, by crossing the ravings of an Irish street-car conductor with the protests of a disappointed check-room attendant.

Eventually the arranger and his partner reach the grill of the Mammoth at 12:40.

"You stay here and watch for them," says the arranger. "I'll look through the corridors. They might have misunderstood the place."

Five minutes later he returns.

"No sign of them yet? That's funny! He's usually on time! Oh, by George! I remember

now, I said one o'clock. Well, let's check our coats."

Wives and daughters of other business men, who that day are lunching in other similar grill-rooms, press about the door in a pleasant perfumed haze. It is a *matinée* day and the air is heavy with scented powder, gloves, and furs.

"Better get a table, hadn't I?" says the arranger, and he threads among the velvet shoulders until he reaches the head waiter, whose shiny head glistens as he bobs from the waist and calls cryptic figures to his assistants. This saves him the embarrassment of making such announcements as "These two never tipped me" or "Hide them near the kitchen door" or "Give this pair to that bus-boy we just promoted."

But the arranger knows his stuff and the head waiter knows his. So four fingers upheld are enough to insure a table in the centre of the room where the traffic is heaviest.

Promptly at one the prospect appears with his gimlet-eyed assistant, who keeps him from

getting let in for anything. This is the first time the assistant, on the one hand, and the partner, on the other, have been brought into the matter. So there are general introductions, a good many unexplainable laughs, and a chorus of "Not late, are we?" and "Not at all; we just got here ourselves."

The prospect is impressed with the table to which they are led.

"Looks as if somebody had some influence around here!" he exclaims.

"Well, I believe in judicious tipping," admits the arranger.

"You certainly are a great little picker. I like the scenery!" laughs the prospect as he congratulates himself on having picked the seat facing the two blondes at the side table.

"Now what do you usually take at this time of day?" asks the arranger as a captain of waiters hands him one menu card and draws out pencil and pad.

"What have they got?" returns the prospect.

"Oh, I *beg* your pardon, didn't they give you a card? Here, captain! Can't we have a few menus?"

There is a snapping of fingers and then an avalanche of cards.

"Well, let's see," murmurs the prospect.

"Some clams?" asks the arranger.

"No, thanks, nothing heavy," is the answer.

"I eat very little in the middle of the day."

"Soup?" This from the captain.

"No. Here, waiter, what are these eggs something or other?"

The captain steps around the table, leans too closely over the prospect's shoulder, examines the line which he indicates, and then replies:

"That ees a poached egg wiz a—well, a kind of a sauce."

"Chicken livers?"

"I sink so."

"I'll just have an order of roast beef and a baked potato and coffee."

"Coffee *wiz* ze luncheon?"

"Yes—a big cup."

"Wiz cream?"

"Why wouldn't that be a good idea all around?" asks the arranger.

"I'll try those eggs," injects the partner and gets a dirty look for his pains.

"Roast beef suits me," chips in the assistant.

"Me, too," concludes the arranger. "And we'll order the dessert later."

The cards are snatched away, bus-boys dart their arms over the table as they rattle the silver and glassware, shake out the napkins, pour the water, splash it with cubes of ice, remove the vase of carnations, and drip squares of butter across the crisp linen. The orchestra gets into its stride.

"Well, and how have you been?" asks the arranger cheerily.

"Fine—and you?" replies the prospect.

"Never better."

"That's fine."

"We certainly have been a long time getting together on this luncheon."

"We certainly have. Say, do you see that

woman over there? Don't look now. No, not the one at the table with two girls. The one beyond that."

Three heads turn with military precision.

"Yes, I noticed her as we came in," says the arranger.

"Stunning-looking woman, isn't she?" goes on the prospect. "Funny thing about her. I used to know her husband years ago in Milwaukee. Moved here a couple of years ago. That's not her husband she's with."

"When I first looked at her," says the partner, "I thought it was that girl in the *Follies*."

"That's a great show, isn't it?"

"Yes, I've seen it so many times that I know all the steps."

The food arrives and the conversation is limited to helping the waiter find out who wanted the eggs, getting the right kind of mustard, and calling for more butter and a supply of last week's rolls instead of last year's.

The arranger realizes that the time is slipping by and that the purpose of the meeting

has not been forwarded. He wonders what he can toss into the din to divert the conversation into selfish channels.

"Well, how do you find things?" he asks.

"What say?"

"I say, how do you find things through the country?"

"Well, I'll tell you," begins the prospect solemnly, though one vacant eye rests upon the prettier of the near-by blondes, "it's not bad and it's not good."

"That's just the way it seems to us," agrees the arranger.

"I'll tell you one thing, though," the prospect goes on, "these birds who thought this year was going to be another boom were all wrong. Most people have had to sell and sell hard. Good for 'em, too!"

"That's what I say!"

"Now, I've got a theory about it."

"You have?"

"Yes, sir, I've given it a great deal of thought. In our organization we have things

pretty well divided up. What I mean is the place pretty well runs itself, though of course I have to keep an eye on the boys."

"Of course."

"But what I mean, most of my time is devoted to planning and concentrated thought and——"

His voice trails off as his eye focuses on the two beauties who have paid their check and are gathering up their gloves and beaded bags and compacts and handkerchiefs and lip-sticks and cigarette-cases. The three heads turn again. There is silence, broken only by the clatter of china and silver, the conversational shouts of three hundred other lunchers and what the orchestra can contribute now that it is really trying.

"You were telling us about your theory," prompts the arranger.

"Oh, yes. Sorry I lost my train of thought. Paying too much attention to the scenery, I guess. Ha! Ha!"

"Ha! Ha!" echo the other three.

"What I was going to say is just this. I have a theory that the whole thing about business in this country is psychological, and that if we——"

"Any dessert?" shouts the returning captain as he spins four menu cards onto the table.

"Nothing for me," announces the prospect.

"Quite sure?" presses the arranger.

"You going to have anything?"

"If *you* will."

All four study the cards as if they did not already know that they fully intended to have chocolate eclairs.

There are always three stages in arriving at the inevitable chocolate eclair. The first is to profess no interest in desserts. The second is to concentrate on the menu. Then:

"I guess I'll take a look at the French pastry."

It arrives, filling two trays. It runs mostly to combinations of whipped cream and pie-crust

sometimes under or around a few pieces of wilted fruit.

"No chocolate eclairs?" asks the prospect, severely.

"He can get one," says the arranger. "I'd like one, too."

"So would I."

"Me, too."

"All right. Bring four chocolate eclairs."

"Coffee?"

"Yes, I'd like a demi-tasse."

"Large cup for me."

"There's some left in this pot."

"Never mind that," the arranger interposes. "Bring a couple more pots and some fresh cups, and some perfectos."

At last, he believes, he will be able to get to the point and he wants all possible aids to digestion—and discussion.

"How are things in your line?" asks the prospect graciously.

"We can't complain," the arranger answers.

"No, sir, we can't complain at all. Of course things might be better. Sure you won't have more coffee? But on the whole we are getting a pretty good break this year. Pass the box to these gentlemen first. Oh, have one; they're very light. But of course we are constantly on the lookout for new ways of——"

"Is that Henry Judkins over there?" asks the prospect. "At that table with five men?"

"I don't know him."

"By golly, it is! Hello, Henry! He's president of Consolidated Fish-hooks. Great fellow. Excuse me just a second. I must speak to him."

The prospect takes the distance to the table of five in three strides. Mr. Judkins remains seated but the other four rise as the newcomer is introduced. There is a moment of earnest conversation. Then the prospect returns to his hosts.

"You won't mind, I know," he says affably, "if I hurry away. I've been trying for weeks to see that fellow Judkins. Busiest man in New

York. Just said he'd go back to my office with me. Sorry to run off. And about that matter you wanted to discuss. Come in sometime and we'll talk it over. Enjoyed seeing you. Good-by!"

Sorrowfully the arranger signals to the waiter to bring the check.

Savings That Cost Money



XXVI

THE business man's joke is pretty stereotyped and threadbare, but a lot of very sophisticated people still go into gales of laughter at it.

That's because they don't see very much of business men. They are easily amused. The real inconsistencies of business men are what makes it a pleasure to work among them and be one of them.

There is a story of a firm of efficiency experts who collected a fat fee for making a study of a certain business office, and at the end could suggest nothing except to hang a sign on the water-cooler reading: "Don't waste the drinking-cups."

In a recent Broadway success a great deal of laughter was heard when a young man in an office had difficulty in getting a lead-pencil. He had to fill out a requisition and have it initialled by everybody from the president to the elevator man.

Anecdotes of that kind are often amusing. The only trouble with them is that they were true of that business era which considered typewriters and telephones as newfangled notions. To-day they are only symbols. And the inconsistencies and footless economies which they are supposed to represent are in reality much more amazing.

There was the business man who went to Europe for a long vacation, leaving a bundle of bonds locked away in a safety-deposit box. While he was gone the bonds were called and when he returned he found that he had lost half a year's interest on several thousands of dollars.

He could have left them in the safekeeping

department of his bank, where they would have been promptly redeemed and where his principal would have been put to work again. He once considered this service but discarded the idea because his bank would have made a moderate charge. He wanted to save it! He did and the saving cost him only enough to satisfy the bank for about twenty-six years.

There is another business man who, some morning just after the first of each month, may be observed writing out checks for all his household and personal bills. It takes him most of the morning and he has a very intelligent stenographer whose salary is only a fraction of his own. But once he found that the meat-market made a mistake in addition and once his golf club put another man's caddy-check on his statement. So now he is taking no chances.

Another business man's family went to the seashore. He lived alone in his apartment. Alone is used advisedly. There was nobody to look after him. Once a week a cleaning-woman

visited the flat. He wasn't going to pay any ridiculous wages to a servant to sit around all summer. He saved the wages, but all summer he reached his office with a thorough grouch from having searched in vain for his clothes and from walking the better part of a mile for a hurried breakfast. And by evening he was too tired to bother to make his bed, so his rest was ruined by retrieving the bedclothes from the floor.

Occasionally a wave of dress economy strikes business men. They decide that they have been paying too much for shoes or hats.

"How much do you pay for shoes?" they ask their friends a few days later. "How much? That's too much. Look at these! Aren't they good-looking enough for any man?" And then in triumph they announce the price.

But by the time those shoes, or the slicked-up, marked-down hat, have gone through three or four rain-storms, a little sleet, and one or two forced dryings on a radiator their owner is be-

ginning to doubt whether a man in his position should wear them. So a little ruefully he gets a second helping and, before the season is over, perhaps a third. Total cost: slightly more than one good pair of shoes and one good hat.

To get the last half inch of a cigar you will see men spearing the stub on the point of a pencil or a penknife though they fill their eyes with smoke, put their moustaches in imminent danger, and eventually ruin their clothes with ashes.

To clip a few dollars off an item for stamps or stationery, any committee will gladly donate many hundreds of dollars' worth of time. And if it is pointed out that better use might be made of such high-priced talent, refuge will be taken in the good old saying: "Yes, but it's the principle of the thing."

What is the principle of the thing?

The man who uses the phrase will probably tell you that he hates to spend money without getting anything for it.

So that evening he will go to a night club where two hundred people are fighting for a hundred seats around twenty-five tables surrounding a dance-floor slightly smaller than his hall-rug at home. His check will be \$38 for some lukewarm scrambled eggs and what goes with it, not to mention what he slips to the man at the door and the fee paid to get his hat and coat back from the coat-room attendant. And the next morning he will spend fifteen minutes telling the office manager that some of the stenographers are using the office telephones for personal calls.

One man in a certain big city has carried a little note-book ever since the income tax was started. In it he religiously writes down every amount he spends for "—plus tax."

Go to the movies with him and you must wait at the door while he jots down "4 cents," that part of the admission which goes to Uncle Sam. Drink with him at a soda-fountain and his ice-cream will melt while he is entering an item for the tax on soft drinks. His lawyer tells

him that he could approximate a lump sum for the year, but he thinks he might miss something which he is entitled to deduct. So he spends a small fortune for note-books and pencils and reason totters at the thought of the time expended in the past few years for entering and adding these colossal columns of pennies.

Footless economies aren't limited to individuals. Often a solemn board of directors will argue itself into costly savings. Advertising is one item on the budget which is a favorite target for the board that likes to cut till it hurts.

Twenty years ago the name of a certain product was in every magazine and newspaper and on almost every fence-rail. The chief owner of the business died and his successors reasoned in this way:

"We are spending hundreds of thousands a year for advertising. We want more profit. Anything we save is just so much profit. Let's cut the advertising!"

They did. For a while the business coasted

on its own momentum. It might have continued for quite a while. But the competitors hadn't stopped advertising. Two objects can't occupy the same spot at the same time, even when that spot is the public's mind.

So the business started to slip. Then it skidded. At last it flopped. The factory was sold for \$12,000. But the directors had saved their advertising money!

In all these instances, and in the state of mind which they reflect, there is evident a national trait—a reaction from American wastefulness. It is a personal protest against extravagance, a groping for something to offset the careless habits of a nation brought up on the theory that there is always plenty more where anything comes from.

But the trouble is that it rests upon the idea that thrift is something worthy in itself. It ignores the fact that thrift, from the other man's view-point, looks very much like a buyer's strike. Let every one save till it hurts and the hurt will become general.

SAVINGS THAT COST MONEY

Putting something away for a rainy day is all very well. But there's mighty little nourishment in a diet of umbrellas.

“It’s a Personal Matter”



XXVII

ANOTHER piece of deadwood which should have been chopped out of business years ago is the fiction created by the man who finds himself out of a job and sends out this item to the business papers:

“Richard Fitzmaurice has resigned as Business Manager of the *Monthly Argus*. He will spend a number of months in travel, returning to New York about April 1. His plans for the future have not been announced.”

On the day when this announcement appears men say to one another:

“Well, I see Dick Fitzmaurice has been let out.”

“About time, wasn’t it?”

“That old lunch-buyer got away with it for years, though, didn’t he?”

“And he never had a thing but a clean collar.”

“What’s he going to do?”

“Goodness only knows. This says he’ll travel until April 1 and that his plans for the future have not been announced.”

“That’s a laugh, isn’t it? Poor soul, how he wishes they could be!”

“Why doesn’t he just say that he wants a job?”

“That kind never do.”

That’s the pathetic part of it. Everybody knows it. He knows that everybody knows it. Everybody knows that he quit because he couldn’t do anything else. And yet this type of man feels that he is “keeping his market value from deteriorating” by maintaining a pleasant fiction of having pushed his sorrowful employer aside because he simply had to rest his tired brain in foreign lands for a few months

before returning to take his pick of the most inviting jobs open to him.

There would be nothing harmful in this by-play, which deceives no one and may give the subject of the news item a scrap of comfort, if it were not typical of that small but very audible and very visible fraction of the business world—the posers.

And their habit of striking attitudes has been as harmful to business in general as target-practice at the Hollywood tea-hour has been to the motion-picture industry.

They are as bad as those mysterious gentlemen who appear in your outer office and who insist that they must see you “on a personal matter!” If your employees know that you are hard at work trying to earn a living, they will probably ask what kind of personal matter it is. Then the caller becomes patronizing and hurt. He even falls back upon that tried and true remark that it is more to your interest than to his that you see him. And sometimes you do. And you find that all callers who have to see you

“about a personal matter” are divided into three classes:

1. Those who want a job.
2. Those who want to sell you bonds.
3. Those who want to sell you insurance.

Those who want a job may come from the law, engineering, publishing, insurance, banking, or from manufacturing anything from cold-cream to cold-chisels. But somewhere they have picked up the idea that it is indelicate to come right out and say: “I want to see him about a job.”

They are he-cousins, those circuitous job-hunters, to those dear old ladies who could never bring themselves to say more than that she is in an interesting condition when they mean that she is going to have a baby.

Yet there have been men who have obtained interviews simply by saying: “I want to see him about a job.” And when one does see him under those circumstances there is no misapprehension as there often is when the personal-matter form of wedge is used and when, after

the real reason is disclosed, the natural response always is: "Oh, is *that* all?"

Salesmen of bonds and insurance may have greater grounds for excuse, because they are sent out by the steely-eyed sales manager back in the main office who has thought out that personal-matter idea all by himself and tells them it's "a wonder to crack the hard nuts for an interview."

He also probably thought out those letters about the bronze desk-pad which is reserved for you and which will be sent as soon as you tell them that they have your address right. A stamped card is enclosed for your convenience, a card which will bring you that bronze desk-pad without mishap if you write in your age (nearest birthday), number of dependents, and your wife's maiden name.

The telephone is a great help to the poser. If he is a real one he prides himself on never calling on any one without an appointment. If possible he has his secretary call your office and ask for your secretary, and from there on the

technic is the same as with the personal-matter boys in the outer office. If he calls you himself, he always has his operator get you on the wire first, apparently with the idea that the way to get a man in good humor is to keep him sitting at the other end of a dead telephone wire until you are entirely ready to talk.

One who recently kept a record of the real reasons for these personal-matter calls for appointments, as afterward divulged, found that a dozen of them could be analyzed in this way:

One wanted to bring in a niece whose teachers in high school felt that she had a talent for drawing.

Three wanted jobs for themselves. One said he wanted advice on a certain point and the certain point was how could he sell more bonds to advertising men.

Two thought it was high time somebody explained the beneficent results of corporate insurance.

One was in search of a letter of introduction.

One later discovered that the man he really

wanted to see was the father of the man to whom he telephoned mysteriously three times in one day.

Two were happy in their present jobs but were just looking around.

One wanted some one to prepare a three-inch advertisement to run once in *Field and Stream*.

Sage Observation on Money



XXVIII

UNFORTUNATELY, money does exist. It's here, like the weather, and it deserves just about the same sort of treatment.

If a person lets himself become a slave to weather, he has a pretty unhappy time of it. He's always worrying about rubbers and umbrellas and mufflers, and he can't go out when the sun is too hot for fear of sunstroke, and he must stay in when it's too cold or he'll catch pneumonia.

If a person lets himself become a slave to money, he's constantly denying those near him the agreeable things that money will buy because somebody once told him that \$10 a week

compounded at 4 per cent will double or triple or do something to itself in twenty years. Tossing it away as if it grew on trees is just as crazy. Most of us get our ideas about money from somebody else, and so we come to adopt a pose about it. The commonest pose is to act as if there is something indecent about money.

The man who gets touchy when money is mentioned is generally a man who cares entirely too much about it and loves to pretend that he doesn't. Money can't be left out of a person's plans any more than the weather can be ignored. To get money enough to make yourself happy and to find a way of making it that will keep you happy while you are doing it is the best insurance against being found sitting around in a high-hat when a rainy day comes.

By Way of Explanation



XXIX

WHEN one of these chapters appeared originally in *Liberty*, a sober-minded young man in the advertising business lodged a strong protest. He objected on the ground that it was frivolous and that frivolity was nothing to use when dealing with anything as important as American business.

It was useless to suggest that the intent was deadly serious. A patient observation of some of our national institutions like business lunches, conferences, and business golf, had led to the sincere belief that customs like these are the strongest possible brakes on the wheels of progress.

Lunching and playing golf are excellent and perhaps necessary. But when they become ceremonials with rituals they become just slow ways of getting things done. Conferences have the worst features of both, with neither nourishment nor outdoor exercise included.

One business executive of national reputation makes less fuss over authorizing the expenditure of \$2,000,000 than many town-meeting gatherings make over the color scheme for the cover of a leaflet. He has confidence in his own judgment, the courage that comes from a record of wise decisions and a respect for his own time.

Once an assistant came to this man and asked him for authorization to buy a dozen new filing-cabinets.

"Make them waste-baskets," he said, "and I'll authorize them."

Customer's Game

—
XXX

THE Snappy Executive is at his wits' end. He has been tackling this problem for three solid minutes without reaching a solution. True, he has been interrupted occasionally—once by his tailor pleading for a try-on engagement, once to admire his secretary's comparatively permanent wave, and once by trying to whistle all the way through the chorus of the hit in last night's musical show.

But, speaking roughly, he has concentrated for three consecutive minutes without a decision. One thing the Snappy Executive hates is a lack of decision. He makes decisions all day long—big decisions, little decisions, evasive de-

cisions, brave decisions; but always decisions. Many of them are wrong, but they are decisions.

His assistant, the office Stupid, faces him across the immaculate desk.

"I'm sure I don't know what to suggest," murmurs the Stupid.

"Naturally," replies the Executive. He moves his engagement pad four inches to the left, thinks better of it, and moves it back. His secretary enters.

"That Mr. Grupp is here again," she says.

"Can't possibly see him," answers the Snappy Executive. "Wait. Perhaps I—no, tell him I'm sorry but I'm tied up in a meeting."

The better executives have discarded "conference," now that the wise-crackers would be lost without it. "Meeting" and just plain "tied up" are used instead. The Snappy Executive uses them both, as you see, for he is a very good and snappy executive.

"And, Miss Kingsley," he goes on, "don't let any one disturb us until I ring for you."

The Stupid has wandered toward the window. On the way he picks up the boss's umbrella to see whether the cover is silk. Having satisfied himself that it is not, he grasps it near the tip and waggles it as he would a golf-club.

"I've got it!" shouts the Executive.

"Got what?" asks the Stupid.

"The answer."

"What is it?"

"You play golf, don't you?"

"Play at it," replies the Stupid.

"Just the thing!" the Executive exclaims.

He opens a drawer of his desk, helps himself to a cigarette from a box of fifty, taps it on his seal ring, snaps the drawer shut, and strikes a match. The Stupid is not smoking and he watches the process carefully, but nothing comes of it.

"Now," begins the Executive, "the way to sell to Hoskins is to get to know him well. I've asked him to lunch, to dinner, and to the theatre, and he always makes excuses. I even grabbed the Century once, to ride with him,

but he shut himself in his compartment all the way. Now! he *does* like golf. We'll ask him to play with *us!*"

The Stupid has been nodding freely until the very end. But now he merely looks at his chief, as the boys who know the Executive know enough to call him. The Stupid clears his throat.

"But where shall we play?" he asks.

"Why, you belong to a club, don't you?"

"Yes."

"Then we'll play there," says the Executive.

The Stupid puts the umbrella back against the wall.

"I didn't know that you played," he ventures.

"Well, I'm in the duffer class," admits the Executive. "Just took it up last year when I was away on my vacation. But I used to play baseball and it will probably come easy to me. I took a lesson from the pro at the summer hotel, but he cramped my style by trying to

change my swing, so I decided to work it out for myself."

"Oh," says the Stupid.

.

Three afternoons later Mr. Hoskins, the evasive prospect, and his son stroll with the Stupid toward the first tee. The Executive has been delayed in the locker-room.

"Shall we wait?" asks Mr. Hoskins.

"He'll be along in a minute, I guess," says the Stupid. "Ever played here before?"

"No, and I'm delighted to have a chance to see this course. In fact," laughs Mr. Hoskins, "that's why I came. How shall we play?"

"I'm not much good," the Stupid replies. "My handicap here is sixteen."

"And Mister—uh?" Mr. Hoskins jerks his head toward the locker-room.

"I really don't know," answers the Stupid. "We've never played together, but I don't think he's played long."

"Then you and I had better pair up," says

the younger Hoskins. "Father is much better than I am."

The screen door of the club-house slams and the Snappy Executive's voice carries down to the first tee.

"What's wrong here, anyway? Isn't there a caddy to carry my sticks? Do you expect me to carry them myself? Can't I get a little service around here?"

"Probably not," mutters the elder Hoskins.

The Executive draws near, laughing nervously. The others stop their practice swings and glance at him.

"Well! What do you think of them?" he exclaims. "Go ahead and laugh! Don't mind me!"

"Think of what?" asks Mr. Hoskins.

"The trick pants! The ker-nickers! The plus sixes!"

"Oh!" says Mr. Hoskins, who has been wearing out knickerbockers for about as many years as the Executive has lived.

The caddie-master approaches the Stupid.

"Excuse me, sir," he says, "but did you forget to register your guests?"

"What's that?" demands the Executive, "is that fellow making more trouble? I had to tell him where to head in before he'd give me a caddy."

"It's my fault," confesses the Stupid. "I should have registered all of you before starting to play."

"What's that? What's that?" the Executive whirls on the caddie-master. "Look here, young man, *now* you're getting insolent. I'll vouch for these gentlemen absolutely!"

"It's just a matter of form, sir," answers the caddie-master. "Just a club rule, sir."

"A club rule, hey?"

"I'll attend to it when we come in," says the Stupid. The caddie-master nods and walks away.

"Well, that beats anything I ever heard of!" exclaims the Executive. "Don't you think so, Mr. Hoskins?"

"I think it's a very good rule to register

guests," returns Hr. Hoskins. "Our golf clubs these days are subjected to some very odd people. Shall we drive?"

With a very easy three-quarters swing he taps his ball 190 yards down the middle of the fairway.

"Bully for you, Mr. Hoskins!" shouts the Executive. "Boys, did you see the old rascal crash into that one? Well! Well! Well! Who's next?"

"You and Mr. Hoskins are playing us."

"Yes, but——"

"It's your side's honor, your partner has driven, so you are next."

"Why couldn't you have said so at first?"

The Executive strides to the tee-box, helps himself to about a pint of sand, and builds a pyramid on top of which the ball looks very small and helpless.

"Now you want to watch this, men!" he comments as he plants his new yellow spiked shoes wide apart. "This is going to be good. Ha! Ha! I like a higher tee than you do, Mr.

CUSTOMER'S GAME

Hoskins. . . . Can't seem to get comfortable, somehow . . . well, here goes. . . . Ugh! Watch that one, lad! I certainly stepped away from that baby, didn't I? Well, why don't you run after it and find it? Think I'm paying you to stand around and look pretty? Gosh!"

.

It is at about the twelfth hole that the Executive falls into step beside the Stupid as the foursome leaves the tee. Throwing an arm around the other man's shoulders, he speaks as follows:

"Look here, old man, you're playing too blamed well. First thing you know you and young Hoskins are going to trim us, and that would never do."

"I don't quite get you."

"Customer's game, old son, customer's game!" The Executive permits himself to chuckle confidentially almost as he would to some one making as much as he does.

"But I don't quite see——"

"I know! I know! You wouldn't. The point

is, these old boys like Hoskins hate like Sam Hill to lose at any game like golf. They would rather drop a thousand in the market than a dollar on a golf course. You can see for yourself. Old Hoskins has been nursing a grouch ever since I slithered that one on the first hole."

"Sliced."

"Well, whatever you call it."

"Of course," the Stupid ventures, "it might have worked out a little better if we had entertained him at some game with which you are more familiar."

"Or if we'd played at a good club," the Executive continues affably. "You really ought to get that caddie-master fired. That was pretty raw. I think I'm doing all right, generally speaking. Of course young Hoskins showed himself up over there when he told me not to pull up that sapling. Why, it was right behind my ball!"

"You're away!" the Stupid calls to the elder Hoskins. He turns to his boss and goes on: "Too bad he missed his tee shot. If you'll pardon

mentioning it, I'm afraid your whistling had something to do with it."

"What say?"

"I say the slightest sound often disturbs a nervous golfer like Mr. Hoskins, and I'm afraid your whistling annoyed him so that he missed his drive."

"Why don't those people get off that green?" the Executive exclaims hotly. Then he raises his voice: "Go ahead and shoot, Mr. Hoskins! It's your away!"

The Stupid ventures to intervene.

"He'll know when to play. Better let him decide!"

"What's the score?"

"Bill Hoskins and I are two up."

"Well, play rotten a while and let us catch up. And we must get in a little business talk."

.

It's impossible to tell whether the Stupid is suffering from too many instructions or has merely run into a slump. In any case his putts

refuse to drop for him, his approaches are half-topped, and all his tee-shots are pop flies to the infield. Even so, the elder Hoskins makes little progress, since he is contending with a partner who not only contributes nothing to the best-ball score but also coughs, sneezes, and whistles and moves about freely during the putting.

On the fifteenth green, for example, Mr. Hoskins has a three-foot putt to halve the hole. Just as his putter swings back the Executive remarks:

“That fellow on that other hole looks like our president. But of course he probably wouldn’t be here. Never met him, have you, Mr. Hoskins? There’s a little proposition he and I would like——”

But when he turns he finds that he has the green to himself. Mr. Hoskins on the next tee is saying to the Stupid:

“You’ll have to give me a six on that hole. Of course, under any *ordinary* circumstances it would have been a five. Fore!”

But by maintaining a frozen silence Mr. Hoskins manages to win a hole or two, and so the match is square as they go to the eighteenth tee.

"This one decides it," says Mr. Hoskins, mollified by the fast-approaching end of the match. "It's a dollar one way or the other. Any extra bets?"

"I'll take another dollar on this hole," says the Executive, anxious to please.

"Make it five!" declares the Stupid, drunk with success in losing.

"You're on!" says Mr. Hoskins.

"Make it an extra five and the regular dollar all around," laughs the Executive. "Six berries on this one hole!"

"All right!"

"Let's go!"

"Shoot!"

With Mr. Hoskins's ball well down the fair-way on his drive it seems only natural for the Stupid to heel his tie-shot into the rough. He

wastes one in the tall grass and his third barely reaches the fairway, with the green nearly 300 yards away.

Then, with the hole apparently quite lost, he takes out his brassie, shuts his eyes, and lunges.

A hundred yards or so short of the green there is a trap—a trap which is the pride of the Greens Committee and the despair of the members. There are those who say it is wide as the Sahara, as long as an elephant's memory, as deep as open diplomacy, and as blind as a bootlegger's card.

The Stupid's ball sails firm and true toward the green, falls 100 yards short, and runs like a rabbit into that welcoming pit.

The younger Hoskins and the Executive play three or four uneventful shots apiece before the foursome comes up to Mr. Hoskins's drive. He takes no more care over his second shot than Webster took over the dictionary. Eventually it is nursed safely down the middle of the fairway. By the time he plays his third,

he might as well have locomotor ataxia. Naturally his head is up before his back swing starts. His ball bobs along with great leisure into the same yawning trap.

By this time the two lesser contenders have picked up to concentrate on the battle of giants.

Mr. Hoskins selects a spade-mashie slightly smaller than a snow-shovel but not so light. He plants his feet firmly, grips the club, and whirls completely around twice. The ball is finally discovered in one of his deeper heel-prints.

Again he summons all of the Hoskins vigor. This time the ball trickles up the side onto safe ground.

But he has played five and still lies two strokes from the cup, to put it mildly.

The Stupid, with four played, lies deeper in the canyon. Some of the early settlers have bivouacked where his ball lies. Signs of a struggle with hostile redskins are all about. And the hardy pioneers, to judge by the condition of the terrain, must have given a good account of themselves before they perished.

The idea of conceding the hole crosses his mind, but he discards the thought as too obvious. Instead he takes a light mashie-niblick, swings casually in the general direction of the ball, and rubs the sand from his eyes.

A cry of dismay comes from the Executive, a bellow of righteous anger from Mr. Hoskins.

The ball has landed two inches from the pin.

.

"You're a great help to me," says the Executive when the Hoskinses, father and son, have said their frigid good-bys.

"Why?"

"The next time I want to get on the right side of a prospect I'll send you to the coast. You've got a great idea of a customer's game. If you'd been playing water polo, you'd have drowned him!"

“You’ll Have Twenty Minutes”

XXXI

A YEAR or so ago a certain industry woke up to find that it was slipping badly. Each year its position was a little worse. Competitive products and aggressive methods were taking more and more of its sales.

Finally it came out of its complacency, organized an association, and decided to advertise. Invitations were sent to about fifteen of the sixty-odd agencies which had been calling upon the harassed executive secretary.

Each one was asked to appear before a committee and was told that it could have twenty minutes in which to tell why it should be selected as the agency to draw up plans and ad-

vertisements on which a million dollars was to be spent each year for three years.

Fifteen agencies. Twenty minutes each. One million dollars a year.

The committee faithfully sat throughout the day, doggedly exposing itself to one solicitation after another. By evening, a little groggy but still game, its members staggered out to dinner. Then they returned to make their decision.

That night's discussion ended in a deadlock. Early the next morning the argument was renewed and presently a compromise agreement was reached.

If any advertising appeared the following year it was not discernible to the naked eye.

Eighteen months later some of the agencies appearing at the original symposium received a letter from the association. It had been found, said the message, that the advertising arrangements previously made had not proved satisfactory and some of the agencies were now invited to appear again before the committee.

“YOU’LL HAVE TWENTY MINUTES”

At least one agency sent its cordial regrets. Why?

Because the method employed at the original session was apparently going to be repeated.

Because no sensible group of business men would think of settling any matter involving a million dollars a year in this fashion—except advertising.

Because the whole proceeding indicated so little grasp of what advertising is and of the character of advertising agency service that a second experiment so conducted could only be expected to end again in disaster.

A million dollars is a lot of money. It took this industry many years to get into its present condition. It won’t find the way out in twenty minutes.

A Comment on "Your Money's Worth"

XXXII

THE advertising man who came upon "Your Money's Worth" before any one told him about it received an impression something like this:

"It's a good, sincere, amusing book. Bad advertising hasn't had such a jolt since Samuel Hopkins Adams went after it. But it puts so much emphasis on bad advertising that the careless reader may think it is aimed at all advertising. What a pity that while they were about it the authors didn't give the public a little fairer picture about some of these things. It may confuse a lot of people."

That is precisely what has happened. It is

an amusing book—thoughtfully conceived, brightly written, and extremely agile in skipping away from a topic and on to something else without quite explaining both sides. It would have been a shame to spoil the points of some of the good stories by supplying the answer.

But too many half-truths can be dangerous. Some of the half-truths in this book give the public the impression that all selling is done by high pressure and that all advertising is prepared to sell people things they do not want.

Mr. Chase and Mr. Schlink must have been surprised to find that this impression was being created by their book. They distinctly tried to avoid it several times in their pages by statements in the interest of fairness. But saying that you intend to be fair is not quite enough. You must be fair, too. Suppose we consider two instances from the book—one in a section about the margin between the manufacturing cost and the selling price, and the other about testimonials in advertising.

Tucked away in one hurrying paragraph is this sentence: "The labor cost on a certain automobile disk wheel as supplied on some of the finest cars is but five cents." The authors might have gone on to explain that a handful of men can do all the human work necessary to turn out these wheels only because they are tending an automatic machine whose original cost and upkeep represent the wages of a small army of workmen for a very long time. But they left the statement with the half-truth and scurried on to a knife-sharpening device.

Testimonials in advertising are, unfortunately, nothing new. They date back to the old patent-medicine days. Testimonials de luxe are more recent. The authors of "Your Money's Worth" (and, by the way, could this title for a scientific work have been conceived for box-office purposes?) reprint two circulars received a few months ago by advertising agencies. Give Mr. Chase and Mr. Schlink an error for saying that one of them was sent out by an adver-

tising agency. Both circulars, sent out by promoters, offered to get prominent people to endorse manufactured products. One was a royal personage; the others were mostly motion-picture people and professional athletes.

The authors merely reprinted the circulars and then hurried on. They might have pointed out that the conservative and enlightened advertising men in this country are the most outspoken in condemning the paid testimonial. They might have said that Earnest Elmo Calkins appeared before the American Association of Advertising Agencies a year ago with a scorching blast against testimonials of this type and that his opinions are shared by those responsible for the greater share of American advertising to-day. They might have explained that in any self-respecting advertising agency those circulars were shown around as curiosities before they were filed—in the waste-basket. But they did not. They merely hurried on.

They hurried on in these two instances.

Dozens of other instances could be given. It seems a pity—in a scientific thesis. They even neglect to tell us that a great many of the manufactured products to which they object are not advertised at all. They pack in the advertised and the unadvertised with such a lavish hand that it is small wonder the public is confused.

Advertising and Selling Fortnightly said recently:

“The biggest advertisers in the United States are not, as one might think from reading ‘Your Money’s Worth,’ those who make and sell articles of dubious—or no—value. The expenditures of such advertisers are negligible. The really big advertisers are those whose reputations for fair dealing are second to none. They employ advertising, not to mislead or deceive, but to help reduce selling cost. Right there—the high cost of selling—is the weak spot in the modern method of doing business. And if the authors of ‘Your Money’s Worth’

will prescribe a remedy for it, they will put business under everlasting obligation to them.”

Perhaps they feel that they have suggested a remedy for the costs of selling. Perhaps it is the organization of testing centres so that consumers may be told authoritatively which motor-car, for example, they should buy. That test costing “about a million dollars” (certainly an odd way to speak of so much money in a book devoting so much time to pennies) would tell the public all about miles per gallon, failures per 1,000 miles, tire wear, and so on.

And can you see what would happen then? The wife of the prospective buyer would take one searching look at the cars recommended by the economists and pick out another car because she liked it! Or her husband would decide on still another because three of his friends had used it and convinced him that it was the car for him. Back of both of these decisions are impressions of style and a knowledge of facts built up by a multitude of experiences, includ-

ing readings of advertisements. People do not buy automobiles from catch-phrases and from not being permitted to think.

They buy the car they want. Make the best-acting car that ever rolled on wheels, and if you do not make it good to look at you cannot give it away. That is human nature. And not very much allowance is made for human nature in "Your Money's Worth," even though its authors profess to be lenient about it in the case of luxuries and even though they weaken toward it near the end.

Instead, they would save human nature from itself. They tell us that we are paying a lot too much for mouth-washes and that bichloride of mercury or carbolic acid, presumably in solution, will do the same work at a ridiculously small fraction of the cost. But human nature replies that those are disagreeable things to have around the house and to make into solutions, and that they have a taste which is, conservatively, unpleasant. It is willing to pay for

taste. Dentists have been telling their patients about a salt solution with a little sodium bicarbonate for years. We want something else that costs more but tastes better. We just like it.

Human nature will not share the author’s enthusiasm for the good old days which appear in such a glow of retrospect through their pages. Where is the housekeeper to-day who wants to follow their suggestion of obtaining a good cereal breakfast food by grinding her own wheat in an ordinary coffee-mill? It is a busy time that Mr. Chase and Mr. Schlink have designed for the American woman—running out to buy 4 cents’ worth of this and 3 cents’ worth of that and mixing it with 7 cents’ worth of something else. Does she want to go back to home manufacture or is she willing to pay for what she wants when she wants it, at the nearest store?

Apparently the cleanness of packaged goods, and the fact that it is worth something to the American housewife to buy food packed in a

place as clean as her own kitchen, does not interest the authors of "Your Money's Worth." Their references to buying in bulk are too numerous for any other assumption. But it interests human nature in a day when the mortality rates for children are dropping fast. There are a few things in life more exciting than trying to save a few pennies.

People cannot be pigeonholed like so many exhibits in the Bureau of Standards. A bureaucratic mind can conceive a world made up of one group of people (consumers) living on one side of a fence and another group (manufacturers and their advertising accomplices) living on the other. But the necessity for earning a living has broken down the fence and moved us all about. Even such professional consumers as the authors of this book have gone out of bounds when at \$2 they offer to their brother consumers a volume which, it has been estimated, costs no more than 31 cents to produce. Apparently even scientists must live, though the discrepancy between this manufacturing

“YOUR MONEY’S WORTH”

cost and its selling price compares rather favorably with the most flagrant examples produced by the authors.

With all its faults of haste and warping to fit a thesis, “Your Money’s Worth” is a good job and worth doing. It says many things which need to be said and many more which have been said many times. It will tell manufacturers little that they do not already know and that they themselves are not working to correct. They realize that duplication of selling effort keeps the public from enjoying many of the benefits of mass production. And they are working on this problem with the genuine intent of solving it—not because economists have told them that they must, not because tens of thousands of stockholders (all consumers, too) are calling for dividends; but because, oddly enough, they actually do want to give the public more for its money.

Poor old, patient, inarticulate business! It has been lampooned so long by novelists and playwrights, and now by an accountant and an

engineer, that it is content in knowing that it is doing its own work well.

One manufacturer, after reading "Your Money's Worth," wanted to invite its authors to visit his plants and see whether they could actually suggest anything that he is leaving undone to serve the public better. And if they had shown a less one-sided picture in their book they would have been invited to see a place where a vast amount is spent every year just to find out how to make better products at a saving for the consumer.

Business men are working it out for themselves. They know perfectly that the public's real interests are their interests. Let a merchant sum it up:

"Of this, however, I am sure there can be no doubt," says Edward A. Filene, President of William Filene's Sons Company, Boston, in *Printers' Ink*, "that the best values will survive in the new forms of competition; that brands designating really best values will be an aid in establishing knowledge of best values in

the minds of the buying public; and that scientific, truthful advertising—both national and regional and local—will be used more and more to keep the public informed of the merits of the increasing varieties of brands and products, which the public’s increasingly better buying intelligence and higher living standards and purchasing power will cause it to demand.”

We're on the Air



XXXIII

ON an inside wall of the broadcasting studio is a double-glass window. Through it you can look into a sound-proof space slightly larger than a drawing-room on a Pullman car and known as the control-booth.

An engineer twiddles the dials and watches the instruments on his board as vibrations from the studio outside are brought into the booth by direct wire and turned into sound by the speaker in the corner.

A group of men and women are engaged in an occupation unknown five years ago. They are programme-directors, production-managers, radio-engineers, and announcers. They are "getting a balance."

Outside in the studio a brass band of fifty musicians is ranged on one side of the microphone. An orchestra of forty more is spread on the other side. The band has just finished a rousing march.

The leader looks inquiringly through the window. The people inside nod encouragingly.

"You might tell him to bring those fiddles a little closer," some one suggests as one of the programme-managers starts for the studio.

"And we'll want more of those chimes in this '1812 Overture,' " adds some one else.

"Shall we get the balance on that next?" asks the programme-director as he goes to the door.

"Yes—that overture uses both the band and the orchestra."

"And the fire department!"

"With cannons!"

"If we can get that into the mike so it comes out like ninety pieces—and sounds like music—I'll never worry about broadcasting anything!" murmurs the radio-engineer.

The rehearsal starts again. Signals are waved through the glass. The conductor stops his musicians, shifts the places of some of them, starts again. Little by little a satisfactory balance is obtained. Other numbers are rehearsed.

The soloist, a singer of great reputation in opera, is comparatively new to broadcasting. He must be tested and shown how to step forward on the soft notes and to turn his face or step backward on notes of piercing quality or heavy volume. He takes the instruction eagerly; in broadcasting, as in everything else, the great ones are great enough to welcome suggestions.

Meanwhile, in other studios on the same floor the evening's programmes are being broadcast. Devious passageways take you through hidden corridors into other control-booths where you peer out into other rooms and watch the businesslike process of broadcasting.

Here a man is crouching under a microphone sweeping a handful of beans across a bass drum. To listeners in their homes it sounds like the

swish of the sea against a ship's side. The roistering crew, bellowing a song of the foam and pirates bold, prove to be eight earnest young men in business suits holding their sheets of music intently as they stand around the microphone. The colored chef whose darkey stories through your receiver suggest a Bert Williams is a sleek young broker type of man who hasn't even a burnt-cork complexion.

But it's within three minutes of time for the programme containing that "1812 Overture" to go on the air. Back in the big studio the musicians are returning from their hasty smokes in the hallway. The calm young man who is to announce this hour is giving the microphone its final placing. In his hand is the typewritten manuscript of what he will say. He glances at a tiny light set in a block of wood resting on the window-sill of the control-booth. The warning will come from that light and the final signal which says that the broadcasting is to begin.

"Quiet, gentlemen, please," says the announcer. "One minute now."

The musicians settle into their positions, careful not to shift their chairs and music-stands, and presently absolute quiet reigns—a vibrant silence, full of the electricity of anticipation. It's a quiet that is quiet. A dropping pin would sound like a crowbar falling through a greenhouse.

The announcer raises his arm and clears his throat. He won't have another chance for quite a while. His eyes are fastened on that light.

It changes. His arm drops. And then in the most genial of conversational tones he reads the opening announcement.

However many times you stand in a broadcasting studio, when that moment comes you must be utterly nerveless to feel no thrill. A moment before, that wise-looking little microphone has been lifeless. Now every sound in this room is carried in a split second from the arctic circle to the equator. A farmer in Nebraska is hearing these opening notes of the band. So are an invalid in Alabama, a tenement family on New York's East Side, a millionaire in his coun-

try place near Chicago—these very notes that you are hearing right here! Letters of thanks or criticism will come from a music-teacher in Texas or Maine, a boy in Michigan and another in Wyoming, a dinner-party in Cincinnati or Richmond, an old couple in Ohio or California or Florida. The telegrams will start coming in within ten minutes from States thousands of miles away—telegrams about what is being played in this room *now*.

“All the stations report it is coming in fine,” says an official. “We’ve heard from all twenty-eight on our private telegraph.”

Those who work most closely with radio never quite get over the miracle of it. It’s unbelievable, it just couldn’t happen; and yet there it is.

A celebrated singer starts an hour’s broadcasting, and before her programme is half finished in will come telegrams from all over the Union requesting certain songs.

Once Madame Louise Homer received a message of that kind from Minnesota. It came

into Station WEAf just fifteen seconds before she was going to sing that very song anyway. That radio fan must have thought that the service was excellent. Because radio broadcasting is a new art, because it is carrying entertainment into millions of American homes, and because it fits into the merchandising plans of an increasing number of manufacturing firms, perhaps a glance at this lusty infant would be interesting.

More than any other form of entertainment radio is an intimate matter. There are several reasons. Radio comes right into the middle of the family circle. It speaks and plays and sings for millions, but those millions are divided into countless audiences of one or two or perhaps three or four. At most a small group of friends is gathered together.

This is no mass psychology.

The same people who will hear jokes and songs in questionable taste at a musical comedy without batting an eye simply wouldn't tolerate anything of the kind over the radio. All honor

to the officials of the American Telephone & Telegraph Company and more recently of the National Broadcasting Company for realizing this situation and setting the pace. It has been kept clean by the people presiding over its destinies. Only here and there has a station been foolish enough to incur the wrath of Secretary Hoover and later of the Federal Radio Commission. The offenders have soon found out for themselves that the best policy is to behave.

But this absence of mass psychology manifests itself in other curious ways. A man will cheerfully yawn his way out of a theatre after he has paid ten dollars apiece for two tickets for an indifferent play. But if you give him a dull programme, or one which he thinks is dull, he will tell all his friends about it and even write to the sponsor about it—even though it didn't cost him a cent!

People will let you publish stupid advertisements in magazines or newspapers and say nothing about it. Those are your advertisements

and you can make them as uninteresting as you please. But dare to be dull or stupid or uninteresting with your radio programmes and you will hear from them, because you are doing it *on their air!*

A theatre audience will put up with a great deal. Part of the audience seems to be enjoying the most tiresome or offensive parts of any show. Besides, a person would be conspicuous to get up and walk out. But walking out on a radio programme is as easy as a twist of the fingertips.

"Why don't you listen when I speak to you?" asked Gladstone.

"Because," replied the youthful Queen Victoria, "because you talk to me as if I were a public meeting."

Broadcasters at first failed to recognize the difference. They sent things over the air as if they were sending them over the footlights.

Another fact to be remembered is that all other forms of advertising are designed for the

eye, but radio advertising reaches only the ear. It is the exact antithesis of motion-pictures.

Comedians and other entertainers who rely upon facial expression, make-up, and gestures for their effects are only partly useful or total losses before the microphone.

Television is just looming over the horizon and presents the possibilities of another exciting miracle. Until it comes the human voice must do its work alone—or rather with only the assistance of music and mechanical effects.

What can be done when this appeal to the ear is understood was illustrated recently when a climax of suspense in a radio play was reached simply by the sound of a knock on a door. It would be difficult to imagine the same sound producing anything like a similar effect on the stage, for then the listener's attention would be scattered over what he saw as well as what he heard. Parenthetically it might be added that the radio possibilities of mystery and horror have been barely touched. The thriller has a

place all its own on the stage and in motion-pictures, and radio is fairly crying for it.

When it is artfully done nothing could be creepier than human voices stealing through space, preferably late on a stormy night, with a story of the supernatural. Nothing so fully takes advantage of the uncanny quality which is never quite absent from radio, particularly when you are listening alone.

It is in planning programmes that radio must make its greater advance. Mechanically it will undoubtedly progress. But, even as it stands in this year of 1928, the broadcasting end of radio and the receiving end are comfortably arranged. Sets and speakers are inexpensive and satisfying in their tonal qualities. Something like eight and one-half million sets are now in use. A great number of these no doubt are old or amateurish and will be replaced by sets that will assure reception of better quality.

But the possibilities of increasing the interest of programmes are just being realized. A few

years ago the greatest height to which the programme-builder's imagination could soar was to engage a dance orchestra, turn it loose, and say that it was sponsored by the Acme Pretzel Company. Programmes of that type, unfortunately, still exist.

In fact, it might be said that there are two prevailing opinions about what a radio programme should be. One is that it is sheer entertainment and that any variety of entertainment from a comedian's monologue or a steel-guitar solo to a brass band or a performance of an opera comes under that head.

But here and there a ray of hope appears. People of imagination are working on it. They believe that a technic will be found which is not an adaptation of musical comedy, nor of the legitimate stage, nor of the opera nor the concert platform.

They believe that a technic will be found that is not an adaptation of anything—that is all radio. At least three such programmes are

now regular features on one of the great networks.

One of the essentials of such a technic will be to make the nature of the programme appropriate to the subject. If the sponsor is a maker of musical instruments, his programme can best dramatize music. If he is a publisher of fiction, his programme can best dramatize fiction. Travel can be dramatized. Even specific messages can be dramatized—a startling announcement, the stressing of a special feature in a manufactured product, a focussing of attention on other forms of advertising.

One thing that makes radio programmes hard to plan is that the sponsor usually has ideas.

It used to be said that, while most men were willing to admit that they couldn't play the violin or remove their children's tonsils, they would cheerfully confess to a heaven-sent gift to run a hotel, put on a musical comedy, edit a newspaper, or write advertising copy. Now an-

other attribute must be added—planning a radio programme. Everybody is a showman, and only too glad to admit it. There's an impresario for every wave-length.

"Give us a good, lively jazz band," one of the executives of a company going on the air will exclaim.

"Hold on a minute," says another. "People are tired of jazz. What we need is a highbrow programme—things like the sextet from 'Lucia' and the 'William Tell Overture.' "

"Where did you get all this?" some one asks.

"Well, my wife is a great student of music—prominent in these musical clubs and so on, and she's been telling me what people want."

"I know, but my boy is sixteen years old," comes the rejoinder, "and he's the radio fan of our household. Now he tells me that people just tune out if you don't give them lively stuff."

"There's too much talk on the radio—that's one sure thing," continues the other. "Let's

not have any talk. Say, what kind of a fellow is this Graham McNamee? Ever meet him?"

What they want is a programme dignified enough to please the most stalwart board of directors, vigorous enough to delight the rhythm requirements of the advertising manager's eleven-year-old son (don't these children ever go to bed?), and spectacular enough to monopolize the centre of all the radio pages. It must do all this, not once, but week in and week out through all the year.

Stage producers rehearse for weeks. Often the performances of the first fortnight are ragged. Sometimes it is weeks of performance after performance before a big *revue* settles down to the satisfaction of the producer. But a radio producer is giving a new show every week, giving it just once, and he is lucky indeed if he can get enough rehearsals even to approach the smoothness for which he is working.

In another way, too, the sponsors are pro-

gressing. They realize that it is the part of wisdom to refrain from trying to wring every last ounce of credit from a programme. Direct forms of advertising on the air have repeatedly shown that they defeat their own purpose, because listeners simply become annoyed and tune out. In the same way it is being realized that in the course of a programme's announcements the too frequent reference to a sponsoring company or its products is just as likely to create resentment. Listeners ought to feel that they are invited guests. To invite a person to hear a programme, and then to keep telling him how good it is and who is sending it out and what he makes, is not the best way to treat a guest if he is to have a good time and is to want to come again.

In fact, in radio it doesn't pay to bear down too hard on anything. When commercialism and art conflict something must give way.

The head of a certain company was hearing a rehearsal for his own broadcasting programme. He pointed to a musician.

"He's not playing," he said. The orchestra was stopped and the situation was explained to the director.

"But that musician should not be playing at that time," exclaimed the director. "He has sixteen bars' rest."

"Then write a part for him," said the sponsor. "I'll have no loafers in my band."

The result is a programme in which all the musicians are playing all the time—one of the most monotonous programmes on the air.

It's the old story, like those advertisements in which some one wants everything displayed in bold-face type. There is no contrast. Everything shrieks so hard that nothing is heard.

Incidentally, that resounding programme illustrates another fact: a certain type of programme may be all right *once*, but it grows pretty tiresome if it is repeated.

"Whenever I plan a programme," recently said a man who is having great success as a director, "I try to think how this form will be in its twelfth week. That saves a lot of mistakes.

It keeps me from adopting a mould that is too rigid. You can't be a slave to a form in broadcasting."

In a word, most advertisers, in their thoughts about broadcasting, are just where they were ten years ago in their consideration of publications. At that time it was a hard job to keep them from making up lists from their own library-tables. What their wives thought about women's publications carried more weight than Audit Bureau of Circulations figures, a proof-book of results, and a comparative analysis of editorial contents. If they caught a chauffeur reading a magazine, that meant that its readers were mostly chauffeurs.

It's much easier to reason from one known instance to a generality than to form an opinion from a collection of impersonal facts. But to-day, of course, most advertisers have abandoned the personal-prejudice method of selecting magazines. And presently, as soon as the novelty wears off, they will follow the same tactics about broadcasting.

Many of them, of course, are doing exactly that. They are talking over the general nature of their programmes with the people who are working them out, and that is all. They know that no single programme means very much, that the public gathers its impression of a radio feature rather slowly, and that the only real test is the general opinion after a series has been running for several weeks or even months.

Every one closely associated with broadcasting honestly believes that the constant increase in its popularity is a wonderful tribute to the inherent hardihood of radio's appeal rather than to the past or present excellence of programme-building. The more a person learns about it the better he realizes that it is a new and extremely difficult technic, and that the best results cannot come from borrowing too freely from other kinds of entertainment. Some of the greatest successes of the stage have been either only mildly effective or total flops, on the air.

Radio versions of short stories, musical com-

edies, plays, or grand opera have left the public only mildly interested. But here and there a brand-new type of entertainment, starting from scratch and designed purely for the radio, has found an immediate response.

The most fortunate thing that ever happened to radio was that from its earliest days down to to-day its direction has been in the hands of far-sighted people who were only too glad to forego the immediate dollar for the ultimate good of broadcasting. Too much credit cannot be given to the individuals shaping the policies of the great networks of stations, particularly the National Broadcasting Company.

They have realized the responsibility involved in radio's intimate touch with the family circle. They have kept it not merely cleaner than any other form of entertainment; they have kept it *clean*.

They have invested in the training of talent for the unique purposes of radio. Recently this has included not only singers and instrumentalists but also writers.

They have had no precedents. Every day has presented a dozen new questions. The answers have been controlled by just one thing: what would give the public the best that radio could offer?

Early in their pioneer planning the officials of the American Telephone & Telegraph Company, who had the privilege of arranging these things, decided that the advertising agency had a distinct place in broadcasting. Now that many of the same individuals are continuing in control at the National Broadcasting Company the same policies are being continued.

They realized that the natural sponsors of broadcasting programmes would be the national advertisers and that radio advertising could be effective only as it fitted into the advertising programme of a manufacturer. Consequently they made no effort to divert funds from other forms of advertising, nor did they attempt to make radio carry the whole burden of a new advertiser's début into advertising.

Occasionally an advertiser has been short-

sighted enough to announce that he is cancelling his newspaper or magazine advertising to try the interesting experiment of broadcasting. The consequent flutter among the dove-cots of publishing is deafening.

And you can't blame the newspapers for feeling a little jumpy about radio. They took it when it was a helpless youngster and they have set it well on the way toward a husky adolescence. True, they did this because radio in its early days was splendid news. It still is, for that matter.

Then to have this ungrateful child, nourished by pages of publicity and columns of time-tables, turn and snatch the bread from its benefactor's hand—what could be more discouraging?

The resulting jumpiness has manifested itself in many ways. At one time most of the publishers decided to omit all time-tables. Of course their readers howled. The publishers muffled their ears and sat tight. And then a

young man named Roy Howard, chief of the Scripps-Howard newspapers and the United Press, quietly knocked the blockade into a cocked hat by announcing that his newspapers believed in radio and he intended to print more and better radio news, including time-tables, than in the past. The faint shuffling sound which followed was the falling in line of the other papers.

Here and there you still find a paper which refuses to print the names of the programme-sponsors and which prefers to list the evening's events with such brightly descriptive phrases as "Travel Talk" or "Orchestra" or just "Concert." But not many are so secretive.

Most of the publishers realize that there is nothing particularly new about using their columns for the good of other men's enterprises. Baseball, prize-fights, books, motion-pictures, the theatre, concerts, automobiles, stocks and bonds—these are just a few of the undertakings and commodities which could scarcely

exist without the support of the news columns and yet can hardly be described as eleemosynary institutions.

It is not quite convincing, either, to say that none of these are rival advertising mediums, whereas radio is. There is advertising in the theatre-programmes, and audiences wouldn't be there to read it if there were no theatre publicity in the newspapers. There is advertising in the subways, street-cars, and elevated trains, but this does not prevent the newspapers from printing the news of these public utilities—their offerings of bonds, their disputes with labor, and sometimes even their good-will publicity. The national magazines are certainly competitive advertising mediums and yet many newspapers ask their literary editors to write a regular review of each month's contents of the leading national publications. No; it is not very convincing to bar news about radio on the ground that it is a rival advertising medium.

The rivalry of radio as an advertising me-

dium will be controlled not by ignoring it but by helping the agencies and the people who are selling time on the air to point out to advertisers that broadcasting supplements and does not take the place of other forms of advertising.

When this is accepted by newspaper publishers there will be an end to the false evaluation of radio news which still exists in most newspaper offices. For example:

A singer of international reputation gives a concert before a few hundred people in one city. The newspapers send their music-critics, who write long notices about every detail of the programme. The same artist goes on the air with an equally good programme, singing not to hundreds but literally to hundreds of thousands if not to millions, and what happens? The event is either completely ignored or a paragraph or two is written, usually by some one from previous experience more interested in the mechanics of reception than in a musical event of country-wide interest. We hear in detail just

how his set is working in a congested part of a big city, but the significance of sending a glorious voice to people who have never, before radio, had the experience of hearing such music is utterly lost. Developing a technic of production is not the only need of radio.

At first the novelty of broadcasting made many an advertiser want to tiptoe into it just to see how it felt. The advertising agency was particularly useful in discouraging these ill-considered experiments. Even to-day, unless an advertiser is doing an adequate job in the primary forms of advertising, he will do well to realize that the air is no place for him.

To-day many agencies have established broadcasting departments and are buying for their clients only the mechanical facilities of the broadcasting stations, just as they buy the facilities of the publishers for these same clients. They are planning the programmes, engaging the artists, and writing the announcements, just as they prepare plans, copy, and art for printed advertisements.

They and their clients believe that by following this method they can produce broadcasting programmes more closely related to the rest of the advertising activities. But it is doubtful if the National Broadcasting Company, for instance, which still produces most of the programmes sent out over its own and its associated stations, can ever abandon its own creative service.

The big magazine publishers have found that they need no departments to create advertising for the firms using their pages. Practically everything comes from the agencies. But broadcasting is still an infant. It will be years before even an appreciable share of the agencies will have any need to develop these creative facilities; some of them may never find it necessary. And some one must be a central clearing-house for talent, experience, and ideas.

Unformed as it still undoubtedly is, difficult as a new technic will be to find, broadcasting has already made a place for itself. It gives the public a new type of entertainment when,

where, and how the public wants it. It carries the best of music to millions in cities as well as in remote communities.

It can get a single piece of business news to millions of people instantly and at a low cost.

It can create a personality so that millions will feel that they know him intimately.

It can build an extraordinary fund of goodwill.

It can interest the retail merchants selling a product, for it gives them something instead of asking for something and it comes to them when they are away from the grind of daily business.

It attracts letters in just about any number—letters reflecting a degree of loyalty and gratitude that is constantly a surprise to seasoned advertisers.

It can make the public read other forms of advertising with greater interest.

The advertiser gets back from radio just what he puts into it—in unselfishness, in friendliness, in sincerity.

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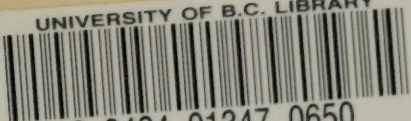
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